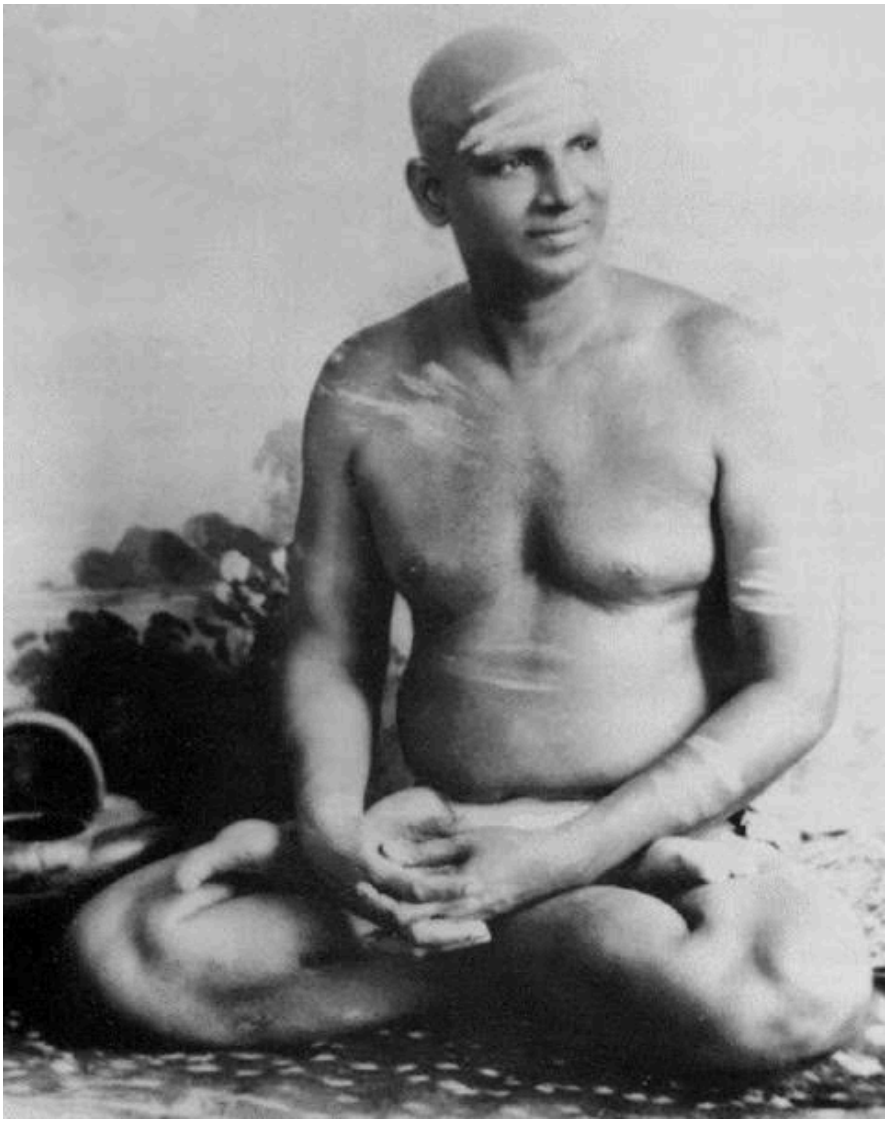


THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE

REVEALED THROUGH
VIDYAS IN THE UPANISHADS

SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Published By
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
P.O. Shivanandanagar—249 192
Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., Himalayas, India

1990

CONTENTS

Publishers' Note

Foreword

Preface

Introduction

I. ISAVASYA-UPANISHAD

1. Isa-vidya (Meditation on the Lord)

2. Vidya'vidya upasana (Meditation on Knowledge cum Karma)

3. Sambhuti-asambhuti-vidya (Meditation on Hiranyagarbha cum Isvara)

II. KENA-UPANISHAD

4. Nirguna-brahma-vidya (Meditation on attributeless Brahman)

5. Saguna-brahma-vidya (Meditation on Brahman with attributes)

6. Adesa-vidya (Meditation on Brahman with the help of analogy

7. Tadvanam-vidya (Meditation on Tadvanam)

III. KATHA-UPANISHAD

8. Nachiketa-vidya (Meditation imparted to Nachiketas)

9. Adhyatma-vidya (Meditation on One's own Self)

10. Parama Purusha (Kashtha)-vidya (Meditation on the Supreme Person, the acme of Perfection)

11. Angushtha-matra-vidya (Meditation on the Purusha of the size of the thumb)

12. Ekadasa-dvara-puri-vidya (Meditation on the Atman in the city of Eleven gates)

13. Bhas-vidya (Meditation on the Effulgence)

14. Asvattha-vriksha-vidya (Meditation on Brahman as the sacred Peepul tree)

15. Asti-vidya (Meditation on Brahman as Existing)

IV. PRASNA-UPANISHAD

16. Apara-vidya-1 (Meditation on the lower Brahman-1)

17. Purusha-vidya-1 (Meditation on the Supreme Person-1)

18. Pranava (Omkara)-vidya (Meditation on Pranava-Om)

19. Shodasa-kala-vidya (Meditation on the Entity with sixteen limbs)

V. MUNDAKA-UPANISHAD

20. Apara-vidya-2 (Meditation on the lower Brahman-2)

21. Para-vidya (Meditation on the transcendental Brahman)

22. Virat-vidya (Meditation on the Lord in the form of the manifested macrocosm)

23. Dva-suparna-vidya (Meditation on the two birds)

VI. MANDUKYA-UPANISHAD

24. Manduka-vidya (Meditation imparted by Sage Manduka)

25. 'Ayam Atma Brahma' Maha-vakya-vidya (Meditation on the great sentence "This Atman is Brahman')

VII. TAITTIRIYA-UPANISHAD

26. Maha-samhita-vidya (Meditation on great conjunctions)

27. Vyahriti-vidya (Meditation on the Vyahritis)

28. Pankta-vidya-1 (Meditation on five membered groups-1)

29. Satyam-jnanam-anantam-vidya (Meditation on Truth-Knowledge-Eternity)

30. Pancha-kosa-vidya (Meditation on the five sheaths)

31. Anandamaya-vidya (Meditation on the Bliss-sheath)

32. Asad-vidya (Meditation on the Unmanifested)

33. Bhargavi-varuni-vidya (Meditation imparted to Bhrigu by Varuna)

34. Annam-annadah-vidya (Meditation on food and food-eater

35. Kshemadi-vidyas (Meditations on Safety, etc.).

VIII. AITAREYA-UPANISHAD

36. Aitareya-vidya (Meditation imparted by sage Aitareya)

37. Vamadeva-vidya (Meditation practised by Vamadeva)

38. 'Prajnanam-Brahma' Maha-vakya-vidya (Meditation on the great declaration 'Consciousness is Brahman')

IX. CHHANDOGYA-UPANISHAD

39. Udgitha-vidya-1 (Meditation on the Udgitha-1)

40. Udgitha-vidya-2 (Meditation on the Udgitha-2)

41. Udgitha-vidya-3 (Meditation on the Udgitha-3)

42. Udgitha-vidya-4 (Meditation on the Udgitha-4)

43. Udgitha-vidya-5 (Meditation on the Udgitha-5)

44. (Sauva) Udgitha-vidya-6 (Meditation on the Udgitha seen by the dogs-6)

45. Prana-vidya (Meditation on vital force)

46. Stobha-vidya (Meditation on the syllables of Stobha)

47. Sama-vidya (Meditation on Sama)

48. Madhu-vidya (Meditation on the Supreme as Honey)

49. Sandilya-vidya (Meditation of Sage Sandilya)

50. Purusha-vidya-2 (Meditation on oneself as Sacrifice)

51. Mano-akasa-vidya (Meditation on mind and ether)

52. Aditya-vidya (Meditation on the sun)

53. Samvarga-vidya (Meditation on the All- absorbent)

54. Satyakama-vidya (Meditation taught to Satyakama)

55. Upakosala-vidya (Meditation practised by Upakosala)

56. Akshi-vidya and Antaraditya-vidya (Meditation on the eye and the indweller in the sun)

57. Vaisvanara-vidya (Meditation on the Cosmic Person)

58. Sad-vidya (Meditation on Existence- Absolute)

59. Tat-tvam-asi' Maha-vakya-vidya (Meditation on the great sentence "Thou art That')

60. Bhuma-vidya (Meditation on the Supreme. Plenitude)

61. Dahara-vidya (Meditation on the small heart-space)

62. Uttama-purusha-vidya (Meditation on the Supreme Person),

X. BRIHADARANYAKA-UPANISHAD

63. Asvamedha-vidya (Meditation on horse sacrifice) 64. Udgitha-vidya-7 (Meditation on Udgitha-7) 65. 'Aham Brahmasmi' Maha-vakya-vidya (Meditation on the great sentence 'I am Brahman')

66. Pankta-vidya-2 (Meditation on five- membered groups-2)

67. Tryanna-vidya (Meditation on the three kinds of food)

68. Neti-neti-vidya ('Not this, not this'- meditation)

69. Maitreyi-vidya (Meditation imparted to Maitreyi)

70. Madhu-vidya-2 (Meditation on Honey-2)

71. Asvala-vidya (Meditation imparted to Asvala)

72. Ushasta Kahola-vidya (Meditation imparted to Ushasta and Kahola)

73. Uddalaka-Aruni-vidya (Meditation imparted to Uddalaka-Aruni)

74. Akshara-vidya (Meditation on the Absolute)

75. Sakalya-vidya-1 (Meditation imparted to Sakalya-1)

76. Sakalya-vidya-2 (Meditation imparted to Sakalya-2)

77. Sakalya-vidya-3 (Meditation imparted to Sakalya-3)

78. Chatushpada-Brahma-vidya (Meditation on Brahman with four feet)

79. Indha-vidya (Meditation on Indha)

80. Avastha-chatushtaya-vidya (Meditation on the four states of Consciousness)

81. Jyotisham-Jyotir-vidya (Meditation on Light of lights)

82. Purna-vidya (Meditation on the Whole, the Infinite)

83. Om Kham-Brahma-vidya (Meditation on Om-space-Brahman)

84. Hridaya-vidya (Meditation on the heart) 85. Satya-Brahma-vidya-1 (Meditation on Truth-Brahman-1) 86. Satya-Brahma-vidya-2 (Meditation on Truth-Brahman-2) 87. Vidyut-Brahma-vidya (Meditation on lightning as Brahman) 88. Vak-dhenu-vidya (Meditation on Vedas as Brahman) 89. Vaisvanara'gni-vidya (Meditation on the Vaisvanara-fire) 90. Vyahita-vidya (Meditation on illness) 91. Pratrida-vidya (Meditation imparted to Pratrida) 92. Uktha-vidya (Meditation on Uktha hymn) 93. Gayatri-vidya (Meditation on Gayatri) 94. Panchagni-vidya (Meditation on the five fires)

XI. SVETASVATARA-UPANISHAD

95. Devatma-sakti-vidya (Meditation on deva- atma-sakti)

96. Brahma-chakra-vidya (Meditation on the universe as Brahman)

97. Savitr-vidya (Meditation on the Indwelling Atman)

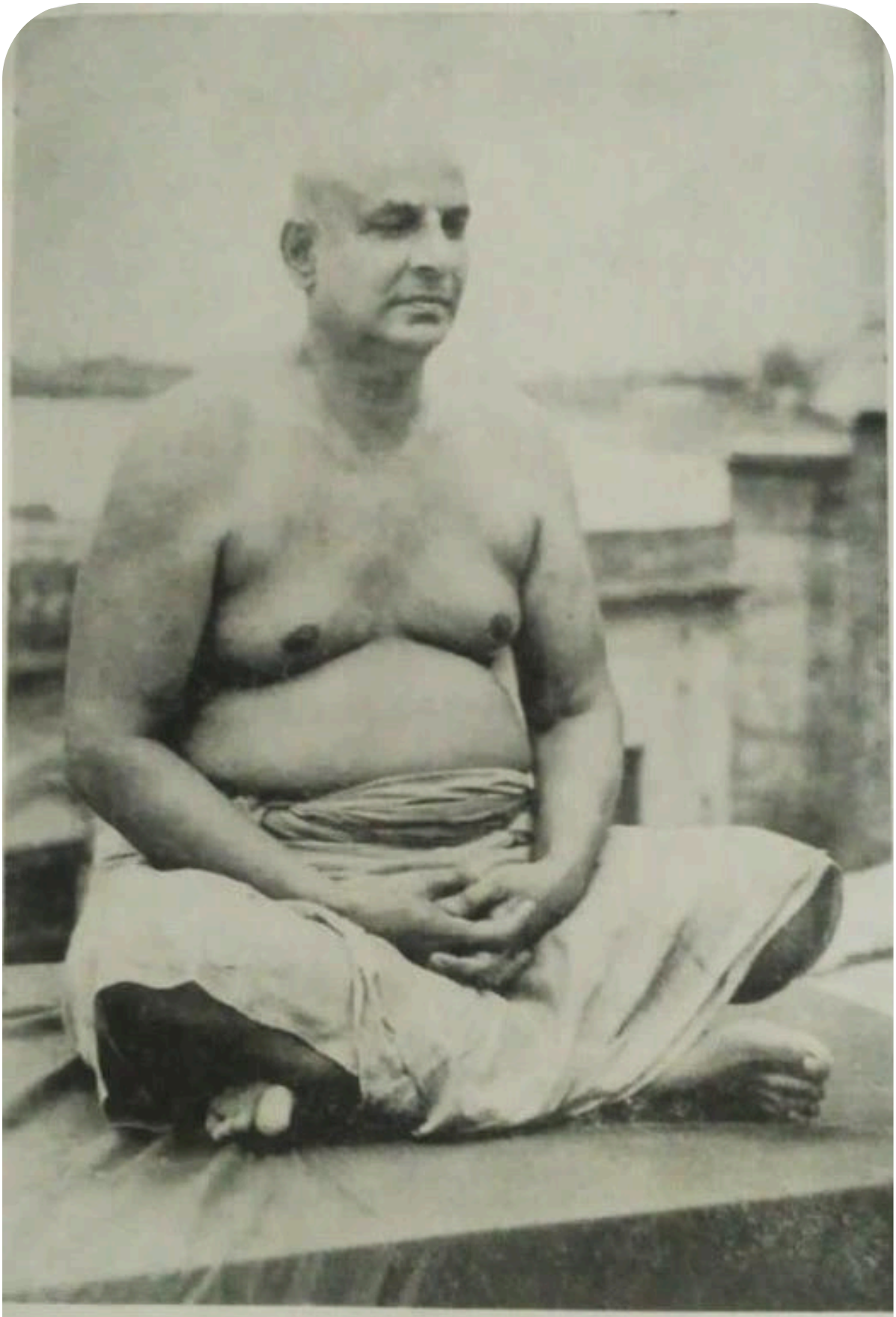
98. Param-brahma-vidya (Meditation on the Transcendental Brahman)

99. Devasya-mahima-vidya (Meditation on the glory of the Supreme)

XII. KAUSHITAKI-UPANISHAD

100. Paryanka-vidya (Meditation on the Couch of Brahma

101. Balaki-vidya (Meditations taught by and to Balaki)



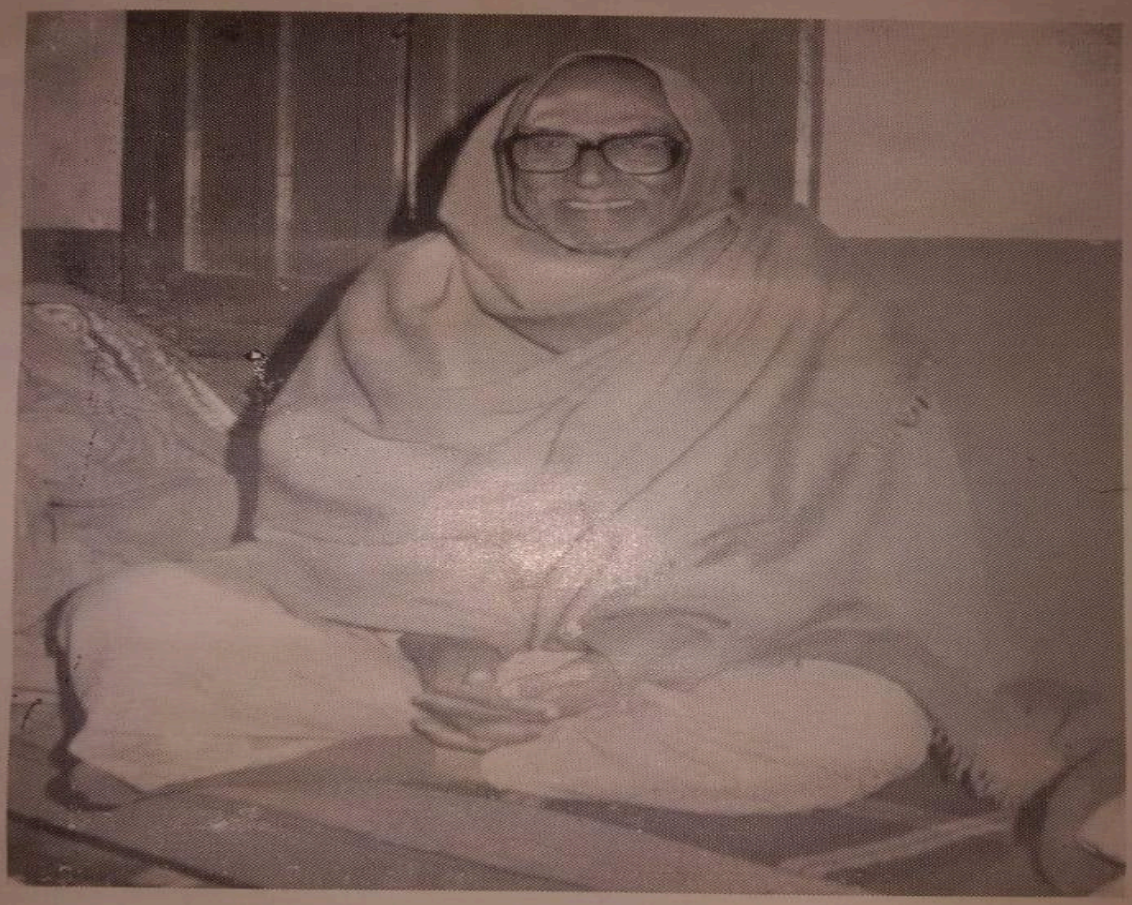
H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Dedicated

To

Sadguru Swami Sivananda

Our Divine Master



SRI SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This veritable standard work on Vidyas, or Wisdom Meditations of the Upanishads, whose author is Sri Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, is, as has been the case with Swamiji's earlier writings, endowed with the clarity of an acute scholar and the profundity of a practical saint combined in one. The Upanishads have these meditational procedures described in a scattered manner in different places and even different contexts. Swamiji has culled every one of these meditation techniques from their various locations in the Upanishads and brought into focus his illuminating commentary on each of them. The work is fairly voluminous but it has certainly the greatness of heralding similar literary and analytical projects on the philosophy and meditations embodied in the Upanishads. This publication is perhaps the only one on this subject, in this measure of width and depth, that will come to the hands of the readers and seekers of Truth.

Shivanandanagar,

5th April, 1990.

-THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

ॐ

10October 1941,

Beloved aspirants,

Thereisnobookinthewholeworldthatisso thrilling, soul. Stirring andaspiring Upanishad.

Thephilosophytaughtbythephilosophytaught by the Parishads has beentheSourceformanybothintoEast and the West. The Upanishadsteachthephilosophyofabsoluteunity.

TheycontaintheSublimetruth,Vedantaandpractical hints and clues whichthrows.muchlightonthepathwaySelf-realisation!

Sivananda

Printed out of the magnanimous donation of Dr. (Miss) Shakuntala Saxena, M.A., M.Ed., and Ph.D., Professor of Education, Aligarh University (Retd.)

(1000 Copies)

FOREWORD

Om Paramatmane Namah! Salutations to the illumined seers and sages of the sacred Upanishads who have blessed all mankind with the priceless, eternal treasures of spiritual knowledge and divine wisdom-experience. My reverential prostrations to the holy Brahma-vidya Gurus of the ancient Vedic era. I bow to the exalted memory of towering personalities like Sage Yajnavalkya, Maharshi Veda Vyasa, Vasishtha and others of high spiritual stature who contributed their precious wisdom-teachings to enrich the Jnana-kanda of the Upanishads for the enlightenment of humanity upon this planet Earth. Lastly, but not least, my adorations at the Divine Lotus feet of Satgurudev Parampujya Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Thus saluting and paying reverence to this unbroken line of Brahma-vidya Gurus, I avail of the joy of a foreword to this invaluable book "THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE Revealed Through Vidyas In The Upanishads."

Our sacred "Matrbhumi" (motherland) Bharatavarsh (India) is a land of divinely enlightened and liberated saints and sages. It is a land wherein flourishes a religion that has its origin, not in any prophet, Messiah or some similar historical personality, but it has as its source an ancient mass of transcendental wisdom going beyond the time of known human history and not deriving from any one personality as its author. The origin of the Vedas is shrouded in antiquity. Over millennia, successive illumined souls have re- corded their experiences adding to this precious mine of wisdom. Thus, it has been progressively enriched over the ages until it was committed to written form by the great sage Sri Badarayana Vyasa who is also known as Sri Krishna Dvaipayana. Deriving from such divine wisdom, our religion also has divine wisdom as its supreme goal, as the very con- India is a summation and fulfilment of human existence. unique land where the divinity of man was proclaimed and realisation of divinity declared to be the goal of human existence. Naturally, therefore, all the scriptures of India have this as their central theme and fundamental thesis.

The subject, the content and the ultimate purpose of each and every one of the Upanishads is Self-realisation, and the means and methods of its attainment. In the light of this fact, you can very well perceive the great importance the Upanishads have for human progress in this world of man. They constitute the greatest wealth of the real India. No wonder, therefore, that all the great spiritual masters of India have insisted upon the unfailing study of the Upanishads as part of the life of a true Bharatiya. The Brahma- sutras, Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita and the sacred Upanishads have been declared to be indispensable texts for daily study by every spiritual seeker. They constitute the common global heritage of entire mankind.

Revered Sri Swami Brahmanandaji, Maharaj, the sage- author of this careful translation and compilation, has done a noble act of unforgettable service to the entire world of spiritual seekers by providing material for this precious book "THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE". Regarding the nature and the contents of this book, you will obtain full details from the author's preface to this book. Even the study of the author's preface and the introduction constitutes an education by itself. I wish the widest possible circulation to this book. I would also congratulate Sri Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj for this unique work and would also take this occasion to express my appreciation, admiration and gratefulness to him for this inestimable service to mankind of the present age, at a time when the world is entering the final decade of this present century. He has indeed earned the choicest blessings and grace of worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

This book is an outstanding contribution to Gurudev's Jnana Yajna.

Om Paramatmane Namah!

PREFACE

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya. Scholars who have done some research work on the subject of vidyas or upasanas in the Upanishads, say that many of the upasana kalpas, texts describing the method of practice, the procedure to be followed and other practical details involved in the upasanas, which existed in the past, are not now readily available. Section 3 of chapter III of the Brahma Sutras deals with some of the upasanas of the Upanishads and states which of them though appearing different, should be combined for practice, and which among them though appearing similar, should be treated as separate upasanas. Convincing reasons have been adduced for each case. This one section of the Brahma Sutras consisting of 66 aphorisms grouped under 36 topics, is wholly devoted to the subject of upasanas.

It is said that the earliest publication in the recent past to give a list of the vidyas is the Telugu edition of the Sribhashya of Sri Ramanujacharya. Subsequent to it, they say that a list of thirty two vidyas has been given by Sri Govindacharya in his English translation of the commentary on Srimad-bhagavad-gita by Sri Ramanujacharya. Later on in 1916, Sri K. Narayana Swami Iyer of Madras published his book "The Thirty two vidyas". Sri V. Raghavan in his learned introduction to the second edition of the book printed in 1962, makes mention of Sri Chandra Sen, the author of "The mystic philosophy of the Upanishads" who is said to. have devoted some attention to the subject and has given a list of eleven vidyas. Sri Raghavan also refers to Dr. Govindagopal Mukhopadhyaya who is said to have given some attention to the subject in his thesis "Studies in the Upanishads". Still later in 1958, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj assigned one chapter for vidyas in his book "Essence of Vedanta". There, Swamiji Maharaj has given a brief account of twenty eight vidyas taken from the Upa- nishads. As Sri V. Raghavan has rightly observed in his introduction mentioned above, it is really unfortunate that the subject

of vidyas in the Upanishads has not attracted the attention it deserves from modern scholars. It is much more true from the point of view of the spiritual world of saints and sadhakas.

Evidently these facts might have been engaging the attention of our most revered H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj (General Secretary of the Divine Life Society Head- quarters at Rishikesh), for some time. I have heard him saying, on more than one occasion, that the Upanishads are mainly meditations to act as correctives to the outlook of life of the ignorant and that practically every mantra in the Upanishads is a vidya by itself, all leading to the ultimate goal of Self-realisation.

One day (may be in the year 1980) Swamiji Maharaj called me and asked me to collect all the vidyas in the thirteen major Upanishads- Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Svetasvatara, Kaushitaki and Maitrayani Upanishads -and write a short account on each vidya. I was conscious of the magnitude of the work entrusted to me. I know it was much more than writing a commentary on the thirteen Upanishads. It is the churning of the milky ocean of the Upanishads and taking the butter of the immortal ambrosia, the Supreme Knowledge out of them. I took it as a bless-ing to have been entrusted with this duty. Without much delay, I started the work in all earnestness. I found it was more manana and nididhyasana than actual writing. There was the difficulty of expressing in words the import hidden in these vidyas. The work had to be stopped now and then due to the physical illness of this body. The type-script was however ready by the beginning of 1984, thanks to the unstinted labour of love offered by more than one resident Sadhakas. Swamiji Maharaj arranged for the publication of the vidyas in "The Divine Life" journal. They started appear- ing continuously from the journal's issue for June 1984 on- wards. There was a break for a few months. Again they started appearing in "The Divine Life" and the "Wisdom Light" issues. So far, more than 60 vidyas

have appeared out of the total of 101 vidyas contained in the type-script. This list of the 101 vidyas is not an exhaustive one. I could confine myself only to the first twelve Upanishads. Even in the twelve, some vidyas could not be included. The omission is regretted.

Dr (Miss) Shakuntala Saxena, M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D., Retired Professor of Education in the Aligarh University (Author of 'Education as an Academic Study' & 'Sociological Perspectives in Indian Education' and Co-Author of 'Administration of Education in India'), a great devotee of Gurudev and a sincere spiritual seeker, a regular reader of the "The Divine Life' and the 'Wisdom Light', was carefully studying these vidyas appearing therein with great interest. Early in 1989, she mooted the question of bringing all these vidyas in one volume for the benefit of the spiritual aspirants. She approached the Divine Life Society Administration at the Headquarters for this purpose and they readily consented to her proposal. She also made a magnanimous donation to- wards the cost of printing and publication of the book, thus partaking in the great jnana yajna which was and is very dear to Gurudev, H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The printing of the book was started in July '89 and completed in March, 1990.

In this book which is being published under the title "The Supreme Knowledge Revealed Through Vidyas In the Upanishads", the vidyas have been dealt with in a little more detail than in the books so far published on the subject. In a book on this type, the use of capital letters at the beginning of certain Sanskrit words and also italics, can be seldom completely uniform. Generally all Sanskrit words are italicised except very well known and common words such as Atman, Brahman, etc., to detect them easily. The English plural sign 's' added to untranslated Sanskrit words is a common feature in the book, as in the case of words like karmas, gunas, vasanas, Upanishads, Vedas, mantras, etc.

In assigning names for the vidyas not included in the books so far published, I have been guided in the case of some vidyas by the name

of the 'object' of meditation, as in the case of Saguna-Brahma-vidya, Nirguna-Brahma-vidya, Purusha-vidya, etc. In some other cases the names of the sages who imparted the vidyas have been adopted, as in Mandukya-vidya, Aitareya-vidya, Vamadeva-vidya, Sandilya- vidya, etc. In still a few other vidyas, the names of the disciples to whom the vidyas have been imparted, are used to name the vidyas, as in Satyakama-vidya, Sakalya-vidya, Asvala-vidya, Balaki-vidya, Maitreyi-vidya, etc. In the case of mahavakyas which are also included under vidyas, the vidyas have been named with the particular mahavakya, such as Tat-tvam-asi-mahavakya-vidya, Prajnanam-brahma-mahavakya-vidya, etc.

I am happy to place this book before the aspirant-world with the earnest request to read and reflect over them again and again. If and when doubts arise they will do well to consult the original texts of the Upanishads with a good commentary which will help to clear their doubts. The guidance of one's own spiritual Guru is a must to 'practise' many of the mystical vidyas.

I offer my obeisance to H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President and H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society for their constant help and guidance. I am grateful to revered President Maharaj for his gracious and valuable Foreword to the book. I am much indebted to Dr. (Miss) Sakuntala Saxena for the initiative she took in the printing and publishing of the book and also for her generous donation for the purpose. Grateful thanks are offered to The Divine Life Society Administration for sanctioning the printing and publication of the book under its auspices; and also to the Y.V.F.A. Press, its manage- ment and staff and the Sadhakas for the prompt and expeditious printing and the fine get-up, as also to those resident Sannyasins and Sadhakas who have contributed their service as a labour of love in the printing and publication of the book.

-Swami Brahmananda

INTRODUCTION

Humble obeisance to the Supreme Lord who is transcendental and also immanent at the same time and who is the Self in all, who is the all.

1. The Goal and the means: Man thinks I am the body, the world is real, it is outside me and God is transcendental', When the ultimate Truth revealed in the Upanishads is realised, he experiences 'I am not the body but pure Consciousness, the world is unreal as the world, but is the expression of the same Consciousness, nay Consciousness itself and God is not only transcendental Consciousness but also immanent as Consciousness in the world. Thus, the 'T'-consciousness, the world-consciousness and God-conscious- ness coalesce and become one without a second. The word 'Consciousness', with its dictionary meaning as generally conceived by the mind, cannot convey what Consciousness really is. For that matter, no word can convey the experience of the pure Consciousness, for It is beyond the ken of the mind and speech. It in the bold declaration of the. scriptures and Sages, that one who realises this Truth, is beyond the pains of this transmigratory life, the life of repetitive birth, existence and death and is in a state of ananda, Bliss-Absolute. What is the nature of the experience of this world after realisation? One experiences that the whole world including one's body-mind complex is a superimposition on the pure Consciousness like the super- imposition of a necklace or a bracelet on gold. Because the substratum which is Consciousness is real, all the world including one's body and mind acquires apparent reality, though the reality is of the substratum alone. The experience of the universe and all beings in it in the three states. of waking, dream and deep sleep, is seen as a long dream. To such a person others may seem to be real or unreal or non-existent or as pure Consciousness. To others he is seen to be real as the body-mind complex. This relative reality of the world is like the 'reality' experienced in the dream

objects. The Absolute is inclusive and beyond this phenomenal 'real' and 'unreal'. The realisation of this Truth is the Goal of life.

The time-honoured teachings of the Upanishads which are there from the beginningless time, have the greatest relevance to the world at all times. The phenomenal world as it has ever been, is deluded in stupor and inertia, misunderstanding and materialism. Time does not wither the eternal Truth nor does it effect the cessation of suffering. The Upanishadic Truth has always been there for silencing all speculative philosophies. The attainment of Liberation is not the prerogative of any one individual or any particular group or selected few. Any one who has a purified intellect and understanding, can grasp this central Truth contained in the Upanishads. The absence of this grasp gives rise to clinging to ideas and concepts at every step, and the instructions in the Upanishads are interpreted grammatically and understood literally. When the Upanishad states that the Truth is universal, cosmic awareness which transcends individuality, the intellect which is not purified and sharp, clings to the words and the ideas behind them and the result is the formation of an individual, limited concept in the mind. When the Upanishad says that the Universal also is to be transcended to reach the isvara Consciousness, again that also is made a concept by the individual mind. When the Upanishad proclaims the Ultimate Truth that all things are finally the one, non-dual, supreme Consciousness, that is also conceptualised and the aspirant clings to that concept. The very instruction that the Truth should not be conceptualised, is itself conceptualised! This is the nature of the lower mind, the mind which has not been purified by practice of self-control. Thus the Goal is missed, rather It slips away like a globule of mercury on the floor when one tries to take it by the hand.

Is there a way to realise this Truth which is beyond all thought and word and beyond all phenomena of this world. Yes, and that is the practice of vidyas as given in the Upanishads.

2. What is Upanishad: By the term 'Upanishad' is meant the concluding portion of the Vedas dealing with the nature of the Absolute. Scholars have different interpretations on the meaning of the term 'Upanishad'. It is said that the old meaning of this term is 'secret doctrine', containing mystic and super-rational knowledge about the Absolute. Sri Dramidacharya, a philosopher belonging to the pre-Sankara period, is said to be a pioneer in giving a new interpretation to this word 'Upanishad'. He gave the meaning brahma- vidya, the realisation of the Brahman- Atman-identity which destroys the avidya, the primal ne-science. Hence, texts which help this realisation also are called Upanishads. The emphasis on the mystic and ultra- rational aspect which is seen in the old meaning, is later on shifted to the harmony of the mystic vision with the philosophical conclusion that is arrived at by a proper use of logic and ratiocination ending in deep meditation, nididhyasana. This word 'Upanishad' is to be understood as that which connotes a hidden and secret instruction on the supreme Truth which is the substratum for the visible phenomenon of the world. It reveals the mystery behind the sense world, the world as seen by the senses and the mind.

The Upanishads are contained in the Vedas. There are four Vedas and each Veda contains as many Upanishads as there are sakhas, branches. The Rigveda is said to contain 21 branches, the Yajurveda 109 branches, the Samaveda 1000 branches and the Atharvana-veda 50 branches. Thus the total number of Upanishads comes to 1180. Among them, 108 are considered important and among the 108, twelve are deemed as very important. These twelve Upanishads are: Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihad- aranyaka, Svetasvatara and Kaushitaki. Some include the Maitrayani Upanishad also among the very important Upanishads.

The language of these Upanishads being very terse and very often archaic, they give ample room for different interpretations by

scholars. Hence, acknowledging the supreme authority of the Upanishads, different philosophers have formulated different systems of philosophies or schools of thought such as Vaiseshika, Nyaya, Yoga, Samkhya, Purva- Mimamsa and Uttara-Mimamsa, as also Advaita, Visishta- Advaita and Dvaita and several others.

Till recently, only the 108 Upanishads were published. Subsequently, 12 more were added and 120 Upanishads were printed and published. Now very recently, 68 more have been added and we have 188 Upanishads in one volume edited with Sanskrit introduction by Prof. J.L. Shastri and published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, Varanasi and Patna, under the title spanishad-samgrahah.

3. What is Vidya: The dictionary defines the word vidya as knowledge, learning, lore, science. According to some, there are said to be fourteen vidyas. They are the four Vedas, (Rik, Yajus. Sama and Atharva), the six vedangas (auxiliary to Vedas, siksha-the science of proper pronunciation and articulation, vyakarana-grammer, chhan-das-science of prosody, nirukta etymological explanation of obscure words, especially those occurring in the Vedas, jyotisha-astronomy, and kalpa-science of rituals, ceremonials and sacrificial acts), dharma, mimamsa, nyaya and puranas. This word vidya is used in the Upanishads in the sense of jnana, knowledge Supreme, and also upasana, devout meditation, because upasana leads to jnana. dhyana is an- other term which, when translated into English, gives the meaning of meditation. The two terms vidya and upasana have a shade of difference in their connotations, as for e.g... in the case of aditya-vidya and aditya-upasana. In the latter the object of worship and meditation is taken as the physical sun that we see in the sky, while in the former the object of meditation is the purusha within the sun. The word, brahma-vidya' can mean meditation on Brahman, as also Knowledge of Brahman and Knowledge which is Brah- man. Similarly, the word 'atma-vidya' means meditation on the atman and Knowledge of the atman and Knowledge which is the atman. Some say

that vidyas like sandilya- vidya, madhuvidya, etc., are brahma-vidyas. Sri Acharya Sankara interprets the expression guhya adesa, 'secret instructions' occurring in the Chhandogya-upanishad III-5-i and ii, as involving meditation. The word 'Upanishad' in mantra II-4-x of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, according to him, applies to those portions relating to meditation.

In yoga scriptures, the words dharana, dhyana and samadhi and also samyama are used to signify deep meditation. The word 'samadhi' may be said to be the equalisation of the Consciousness in the subject and the object. It is the restoration of the balance in the Consciousness which may be said to be out of balance when there is separate world-consciousness. nididhyasana is another word used in Vedantic literature to signify deep meditation which follows after long and continued reflection on the 'object' of meditation. prasamkhyana is also a term which means meditation. The word 'yoga' also is largely used in the sense of nieditation. Although yoga strictly means the final con- summation wherein the individual Consciousness, as though, merges with the universal Consciousness, all preliminary practices leading to this final state, are also called yoga. Similarly ritualistic worship, chanting of stotras, japa (oral and mental), reflection, cogitation on the real nature of one- self, may also come under the purview of the term 'meditation', because all of them end in meditation. Introversion of the mind is involved in them, because it has to be turned away from the sense objects. The word vijnana also is sometimes used to mean meditation. The term tapas also means meditation in many contexts. In the present context where we are concerned with the meditations in the Upanishads, the words vidya and upasana are used as synonyms to mean deep meditation which are intended to act as correctives for the binding effects of human thought and actions.

Gurudev H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj says: "Meditation is the centering of the force of thought on the highest conception of the

ideal to be attained. Hence, meditation starts with a belief in the reality of a dual existence, for, without such a faith in duality, meditation becomes impossible. Meditation starts with duality and ends in the glorious Consciousness of the unity of life. A belief in the degrees of truth and reality in Being, is necessitated by the fact that the whole universe is a gradual materialisation of the highest Brahman Itself. A completely transcendent Being unconnected with the meditator is impossible to be meditated upon. Truth is immanent too. The object of meditation (the subject which is really the infinite) is very closely connected with the meditator and exists as his very essence, and hence the possibility of the realisation of the Infinite through meditation. The world is to be made use of as a step in the ladder of ascent to the glory of transcendental spiritual perfection".

A thoughtful or deep consideration and deep reflection on any object or concept especially spiritual-this is the common dictionary meaning of the word 'meditation'. 'Contemplation' is another word which also means the same process of deep and serious thinking on a given subject. It is a well known fact that concentration is to direct one's thoughts or efforts to- wards the object of concentration and that concentration leads to contemplation and meditation. The two words 'concentration' and 'meditation' also seem to have a some- what similar meaning, the latter being a more intense form of the former in the field of religion and philosophy. In spiritual literature, the object of meditation is always the supreme God or any of His manifestations. Starting with contemplation on His partial manifestations or their symbols, the process of meditation culminates in Being wherein chit, Consciousness-Absolute, becomes one with sat, Existence- Absolute. sat is chit and chit is ananda, Bliss-Absolute. In the highest meditation which Upanishads prescribe, the sat which we are to meditate upon is 'the Being in the subject and the object' without the subject and object. It is Existence-Absolute which includes the existence of everything including that of the meditator' and at the same time

excludes and is devoid of 'everything'. Therefore, in such meditations, the meditator becomes one with that Absoluteon which he meditates. This stage can only be 'experienced', but not explained, perhaps not even 'experienced' in the usual sense of the term. At this stage, the word 'meditation' loses its usual meaning of being a mental process and assumes a totally different significance. In raja yoga, it is dhyana, the last but one step, which effects the final consummation of spiritual endeavour.

Some say: "Meditation is communion with an unseen Realm that pours its influence upon us and makes us new men. The test of this influence is experience of 'peace' in life. Meditation is an experience which blooms in the feeling of the presence of God in daily life. This experience lifts us above the world of atoms and electrons. This experience links us with the Atman wherein Truth abides and Love is radiant and Beauty hath her eternal shrine".

Meditation according to Sage Patanjali is the process of keeping a continuous and uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the chosen object. Sri Acharya Sankara in his aparoksha'nubhuti, a short treatise on God-experience, de- fines meditation as that state in which the mind, without any support, holds on to the sad-vritti, that most auspicious modification of the mind 'I am Brahman verily, which is the bestower of supreme Bliss. And this meditation, says the Acharya, leads to complete changeless- ness of mind and complete forgetfulness of all thought, which culminates in identification with Brahman which is termed samadhi and also jnana.

While commenting on the 24th verse in chapter XIII of the Bhagavad-gita, Acharya Sankara says that dhyana, meditation, consists in the withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects, through concentration, into the mind and then withdrawal of the mind into the inner intelligence and then contemplating on the inner intelligence. He refers to the analogies cited by the Chhandogya-upanishad VII-6-1:

"The space meditates as it were, the earth meditates as it were, the mountains meditate as it were, etc."

He also says that meditation is a continuous and un- broken thought on the object of meditation like a line of flowing oil. Again, in his monumental commentary of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, in one place (I-3-ix), he defines meditation as mentally approaching the form of the deity meditated upon as it is presented by the eulogistic portions of the Vedas relating to that particular deity and concentrating on it excluding conventional notions, till one is as completely identified with it, as with one's body conventional- ly regarded as one's Self.

While dealing with tat-tvam-asi maha-vakya, Sri Suresvaracharya in his naishkarmya-siddhi III-90, refers to the view of some that prasamkhyana means repeated dwelling in thought on what is proclaimed by texts such as tat-tvam- asi and its intellectual ascertainment by rational discrimination. When this kind of prasamkhyana is practised, it generates complete knowledge by progressively increasing the measure of right knowledge and not by simply increasing the concentration of mind. It is unlike the false conviction that a woman is beautiful by constantly thinking about the beauty in her body.

To quote Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji again, he says, "There are three kinds of wisdom-meditations. The first is brahmabhavana, feeling that everything is Brahman, that there is no such thing as 'other than Brahman', that Brah- man alone exists, and so, "That One' is the immortal Brah- man, the infinite Existence. The second is padartha-bha- vana-tyaga, renunciation of the idea that things which we see are mere material objects, i.e., affirmation of the fact that what seem to be physical worlds and material bodies are really the Supreme Soul, Brahman alone and that all is Brahman Itself. The third is kevala bhavana, feeling that the subject is identical with the object, that there are no two such things as subject and object, that the individual

is identical with the Supreme and hence 'that one' is the Absolute, independent Brahman".

brahma'bhyasa also can be considered as a form of meditation. The Yoga Vasishtha, Utpattiprakarana 22-xxiv, says: tat chintanam tat kathanam anyonyam tatprabodha- nam; etadeka paratvam cha tadabhyasam vidur-budhah- The wise know that reflecting about the supreme Brahman alone, speaking about That alone, conversing mutually about That alone and thus completely being occupied with That alone, is meditation on Brahman. Some others describe brahma'bhyasa thus: "This phenomenal universe has never been created and therefore, it does not really exist as different from the Absolute. What appears as this world and also as 'T', does not exist apart from pure Consciousness. Consciousness alone is. Making this conviction firm through re- petition, is brahma' bhyasa".

The Upanishads which deal mainly with supreme non- dual Knowledge, also instruct on three kinds of upasanas- upasana for attainment of material prosperity, upasana on the lower Brahman the result of which is gradual liberation and upasana connected with ritualistic karmas and sacrifices for enhancing the results of karmas. All the three involve mental vrittis. advaita jnana also may be said to involve a vritti which finally dissolves by itself after making the meditator one with the non-dual Truth. All of them find a place in the Upanishads. All upasanas reflect the Truth, and hence, they are helpful to attain the advaita jnana. It is, therefore, very significant that the scriptures use both the terms 'vidya' and 'jnana' for upasana. As there is something for the mind to rest upon, these upasanas are said to be comparatively easy of practice to the majority of the aspirants. Since pure upasana unconnected with rituals is more difficult for those who are habituated in the performance of karmas, those upasanas in combination with karmas are also included in some places.

The commentator, Sri Sankaracharya points out that there are three classes of men who wish to acquire wisdom. The highest consists of

those who have renounced the world, controlled their mind and who are eager for liberation, to whom are intended the Upanishads. There are others who wish to attain gradual liberation by attaining the world of hiranyagarbha, to whom is intended knowledge and worship of prana. The third class consists of those who care only for worldly possessions to whom the meditative worship of the samhita is intended.

One of the minor Upanishads says: The best sadhana is tattva-chintanam, meditation on the Supreme, lower to that comes sastra-chintanam, meditation on the various scriptural teachings, still lower to it is mantra-chintanam, meditation on the mantra to which one is initiated by one's preceptor, and the lowest is tirtha-yatra, pilgrimage to holy places and bath in sacred rivers. One may start with tirtha-yatra, then take up mantra-chintanam, thereafter sastra- chintanam and reach the last step of tattva-chintanam. But, one is not to stagnate even in the last stage of meditation on the Supreme. He has to pass on to the final stage of non-dual identity. This fact is hinted at in a verse in the Avadhuta-gita which says:

tvadyatraya vyapakata hata te,

dhyanena chetah parata hata te,

stutya maya vakparata hata te,

kshamasva nityam trividha'paradhan.

This verse entreats pardon from the Lord for three 'sins' committed daily. What are those 'sins'? They are: (i) through pilgrimage one rides rough-shod over the all- pervasive and beyond-space-nature of the Supreme, (ii) through meditation one sets at naught the great Vedic declaration that the Atman-Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind, and (iii) through verses of praise, one, without any consideration, domineers over the transcendental nature of the Absolute which is beyond all speech (VIII-1).

Pilgrimage, chanting hymns in praise of the Lord and meditation on Him, three daily practices of a seeker, are referred to as 'sins' in this verse. This is to be taken as eulogy on the Supreme Brahman and not decrying or discouraging saguna-upasana through holy pilgrimages, ritualistic worship, study of scriptures and meditation as pre- scribed in the Upanishads. All forms of worship and meditation involve duality and the Supeme is non-dual, nay beyond even non-duality.

Spiritual literature such as the Upanishads, the Bhaga- vad-gita and the Brahma Sutras constituting the prasthanatraya of the Vedantins, as also other scriptures like the Yoga Vasishtha, Srimad-Bhagavata, other Puranas and the Epics give us several techniques for meditation, some succinctly and others in a more elaborate form. In the karma and upasana kandas of the Vedas, we have elaborate accounts of various techniques of meditation which are combined with ritualistic worship and sacrifices. The meditations in the Upanishads called vidyas may be said to be preparatory practices to be done by the aspirants before he approaches his spiritual master for the final initiation into the supreme Knowledge through the mahavakyas. Meditation may be said to occupy an intermediate position between karma and jnana. One should start with karma, then com- bine karma with meditation, then practise pure meditation leaving off karma and finally attain jnana, the Supreme Knowledge. In short, here in the Upanishads the term vidya means Knowledge and meditation, a comprehensive insight into the nature of the Reality behind the phenomena.

4. Nature of Truth: The essential nature of man is 'Absolute'. The Absolute Itself, through Its own inherent, inexpressible, illusory power called maya or ajnana, has as though hidden Itself and has projected Itself as this phenomenal universe, in which It Itself appears as a trans- migrating individual with all kinds of limitations. This illusion of ajnana can be done away with only through jnana, Knowledge-Supreme, which is neither objective nor subjective. The 'Absolute', as the term itself indicates, is un- conditioned and non-relational and therefore,

cannot be thought of, much less expressed in words, as an object or even as the subject, for the mind and the organ of speech, are both of limited power, being themselves products of the illusory power.

For purposes of instruction, the scriptures say that there are however two aspects of this Absolute which can be brought under human thought and given expression to through speech. They are called the saguna and nirguna- with attributes and without attributes-,also called sakara and nirakara-with form and without form. The form is present in the formless, even as a statue is present in an uncarved block of marble. The attributes are similarly present in the attributeless.

The attributeless aspect is generally known through the epithet sat-chit-ananda-Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute. In the empirical sense, the three terms Existence, Consciousness and Bliss may appear to be three different attributes. But in contexts where these words are used to give the definition of the essential nature of the Absolute, they lose their empirical meanings and connote the one, non- dual, infinite Atman-Brahman alone. In order to remove the sense of limitation which these three words may create in the mind, the commentators say that they should be understood as negating their opposites. Existence therefore means 'not non-existence', Consciousness means 'not un- consciousness', and Bliss means 'not misery and pain'. Thus the term sat-chit-ananda means denial of the attributes of non-existence, unconsciousness and unhappiness. Actually the word nirguna does not mean 'without attributes' as generally translated. The attributes of God are different from worldly limited attributes, for

God's attributes are limitless and endless. He possesses simultaneously all attributes taken to their logical limits and beyond, both the so- called positive and negative, the good and the bad, the pleasurable and the painful. Because He is infinite, there cannot be such differences as positive and negative, good and bad, merit and sin, light and darkness, etc., in Him. Thus the attributelessness becomes

an attribute of God. Hence, He is both saguna and nirguna and transcends both, all simultaneously.

The other aspect of the Absolute which is 'with attributes' called saguna brahman, isvara, is to be understood as the causal form of the universe, who is the supreme Person, who is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. maya, the great illusory power is the cause of istara who wields it as his own power for his further manifestations as hiranyagarbha, the subtle, cosmic intelligence, mind and vital force, and as virat, the sum total, as it were, of all these gross universes. All the three viz. isvara, hiranyagarbha and virat are the universal manifestations of the supreme Absolute in the causal, subtle and gross forms respectively. The further manifestations of the virat are brahma, vishnu and siva, the trinities and the universal deities such as indra, agni, varuna, the dik-devatas, etc., in charge of the different functions in the universe, the super- human and sub-human beings and the insentient objects. The universal deities occupy and preside over every limb of the individual who is himself a part of the universal, a limb in an organic whole which the universe is.

The avataras such as Sri Rama, Lord Krishna and the rest are also He alone. People immersed in the sense-world fail to understand the inscrutable power and glory of the Lord. Devotional scriptures describe the divine nature of the devotees of the Lord, which may seem to be fantastic and unbelievable to the modern mind of man. Devotees talk to God as we talk with each other. Scriptures are replete with instances where God served His devotees by providing them wealth, provisions, etc., to celebrate marriages and did menial, physical service such as cleaning the floor, draw- ing water from the well and the like. There have been instances where great devotees were bodily taken to vaikuntha, the world of Lord Vishnu and kailasa, the world. of Lord Siva. All this is possible when there is complete devotion and self-surrender to the Lord. It is all wonder to the ignorant and the non-believing. They may even go to the extent of saying that

it is all hallucination. But to the devoted and the Knower of Truth, it is their own uncontradicting experience. They finally experience not only certain particular manifestations as God, but also the whole universe without leaving an atom, as God, for what else is all this that is seen and heard of, if not His expressions, His glory!

The Supreme is also described as omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is omniscient, because He is pure Consciousness itself. He is said to be sarvajna and sarvavit which means that He has knowledge of the general essence of all and also got particular knowledge of every individual object. Wherever there is knowledge, there is power also. The latter is the form taken by the former. Power becomes perfect and complete when knowledge be- comes perfect. Therefore, omniscience is omnipotence. These two naturally presuppose omnipresence. That which is not omnipresent cannot be omniscient and omnipotent. Thus, these three terms mean one and the same, namely, the Supreme, the Infinite. They should not be considered as mere adjectives qualifying the conditioned Infinite.

The full and complete significance of the term 'infinite' cannot be grasped by the individual intellect which is by its very nature, finite and limited. When through spiritual practice, the individual intellect transcends its individuality and separateness and becomes one with the Cosmic Intelligence, it realises what the Infinite is. Then there is no understanding of the Infinite by the finite, as there are no two separate entities as the finite and Infinite. A drop in the ocean may be said to know the ocean only in a figurative sense when it realises its oneness with the ocean. As long as it thinks in its ignorance that it is distinct from the ocean, that it is insignificant and small, while the ocean is great and vast, it is only a drop and not the mighty ocean. But, even while it is thinking that it is only a drop and separate from the ocean, it is really one with the ocean, nay it is the ocean itself. Similar is the case with the individual and the Infinite.

The Infinite is said to be veiled, as it were, by ignorance. The question naturally arises as to how the Infinite can be veiled. The very idea of such a veiling the Infinite involves self-contradiction. There is nothing other to the Infinite.

Otherwise the Infinite cannot be said to be Infinite. Even if we presume the existence of something other to the Infinite hypothetically, that something can only be finite, for there cannot be more than one Infinite. And a finite entity can never veil the Infinite. Again, if we are to admit that the Infinite is really veiled due to some kind of obscuration, then the Infinite could no longer be called Infinite and It would have to be relegated to the realm of the finites which alone can be subjected to changes such as veiling and reveal- ing.

But, we see from our daily experience, which is the uniform experience of all people, that our real nature of Infinite-Absolute-Existence-Consciousness-Bliss remain veiled or obscured, in as much as we are not aware of it and we think and believe that we are finite mortals beyond redemption. The trouble does not stop with mere obscuration. In the place of the non-dual Supreme, we perceive a world of multiplicity which appears real to all the five senses and the mind, and we are subjected to the merciless play of the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, likes and dis- likes, etc. The work of ajnana, also called maya, is now complete and millions and billions of lives pass on endlessly in the cycle of transmigration which is termed samsara, meaning endless going and coming like the continuous move- ment of the pots in the Persian wheel either moving up filled with water or moving down empty.

This individual intellect caught up in this wheel, cannot understand fully the nature of the cause of samsara, because it is a part of it, like a small ant caught up in one of the pots in the Persian wheel. An effect can never know its cause as long as the effect remains as an effect.

Once a father took his young boy of three or four to a marriage celebration of a near and dear relative. Returning home after attending the various programmes in the marriage function such as the rituals, music performances, dances, dinner and so on, the father was explaining to the mother of the boy, his own wife, in a picturesque manner, every detail of their experiences in the celebration. This conversation between the husband and wife naturally turned to the more elaborate and nice programmes in their own marriage ceremony which was celebrated only some five years back. The young intelligent boy was listening all the time with great interest, and suddenly asked his father: "Daddy, why did you not take me to your marriage?" How could the father satisfy the child with a proper answer to its quest- ion! Even if the father explained the cause of his not taking him, how could the child of three or four years grasp its significance! The parents gave a hearty laugh, took the child in their arms and hugging it to their bosom, kissed it and caressed it. The question of the child is inadmissible. Somewhat similar is the case of all questions with regard to God and His creation raised in the state of ignorance.

The Infinite becoming veiled is a mystery which can- not be logically explained. The cause of this veiling which is ignorance, is also an equally mysterious entity which can not be said to be either existent or non-existent. It is, there- fore, called anirvachaniya in Sanskrit, which term itself means 'that which is inexpressible through words'. The effect of this cause which is this phenomenal world is also equally mysterious, in the sense that though appearing real and concrete, it does not stand the test of a philosophical enquiry. The sages who have solved this mystery are also a mystery. So the Upanishad says: "ascharyo vakta kusalo'- sya-labdha ascharyo jnata kusala'nusishtah- the expounder of this mystery, the mystery of the Supreme and Its manifestation as this universe, is wonderful, the receiver of Its knowledge is wonderful and wonderful is he who knows It, being instructed by the preceptor" (Ka. Up. I-2-vii). The Bhagavad-gita also

voices the same truth: "ascharyavat- pasyati kaschidenam ascharyavad-vadati tathaiva cha'nyah; ascharya-vachchainam-anyah srinoti srutvapyenam veda na chaiva kaschit-One sees the Supreme as a wonder, another speaks of It as a wonder, another hears of It as a wonder and though hearing about It, none understands It at all" (II-29). The whole thing is a mystery to the mind of the common man. That which causes the mind to say that everything is a mystery, is also a mystery. We always think in terms of others' thoughts which we get from the time of birth-thoughts of the mother, father, teachers, friends, scientists, etc. We become their friends and we start thinking like them about the nature of this world, that it is something real and external to us.

A thief becomes a welcome guest if one becomes friendly with him and then that one also becomes a thief. But if one is not a thief, he does not consider theft as desirable. If one joins a group of thieves and becomes one among them, then to that one, thieving will become justifiable and there will be nothing wrong in it. All men have joined with the wrong notion about the world and hence are unable to know the mistake. When one detaches oneself from it, the world as reported by the senses will be seen as relative and phenomenal and all previous notions of its reality as wrong.

The human intellect which is a product of this great mystery, cannot answer the why of the mystery of the Infinite getting itself obscured and veiled and the One Infinite becoming the many finites. But it has been solved by the great sages by transcending their individual intellect, and their experiences have been recorded which go by the name of scriptures. They say that it is ajnana, the primal nescience that is at the root of this mystery. It is the ignorance of the true nature of one's own Self and of the universe. What is this ignorance and how to destroy it and its effects, so that we may regain our true nature?

Let us take any one of the classical analogies provided by the scriptures, say the rope-snake illusion. Just as in this analogy the

perception of the snake is due to the ignorance of the rope, the perception of this world is due to the ignorance of the supreme Brahman. The unreal snake makes the man jump and run causing injury and pain in his leg. Similarly, this phenomenal world creates all sorts of pain and misery. Even as the remedy in the analogy is the know- ledge of the rope alone, here also the only panacea for all our ills and sufferings caused by this world, is the knowledge of the Atman-Brahman, one's own Self, the Self in all. In the analogy, we say that an unreal snake is superimposed on the real rope. Similarly the phenomenal world is said to be superimposed on the Noumenon, the Atman-Brahman, the only Reality which transcends the phenomenal 'real' and the 'unreal'. This superimposition itself is a false one and an impossibility in the Infinite. But it is seen to have been made possible by the absence of proper discrimination.

This body (both the gross and the subtle) with all its constituents such as the physical sheath consisting of skin, flesh, blood, bones and marrow, the vital force, the sense and motor organs, the mind, the intellect and the ego principle, which forms a part of the world, is also a super- imposition on the Atman, the innermost essence which is non-different from Brahman. The term 'Atman' is used by the scriptures to denote the supreme Brahman with reference to the individual body. The Infinite is, as it were, limited by the body. Thus seemingly encaged, It struggles to regain its original nature of infinity and complete freedom. All activities of man, day in and day out, are the result of this urge of the Soul within. All organisations starting from the small family in a house, right up to a world Government, a pious hope of great world reformers, are aimed consciously or unconsciously, at this one goal of complete freedom from pain and limitations through expansion of the individual into the universal, and then into the Infinite. All these external activities are only artificial and temporary remedies for the great ill of ignorance. And being creations of the intellect which is also an effect of ignorance and a part of the

world, these remedies cannot but prove futile, even as the best doctor only fails to re- move the poison of the rope-snake in the analogy. All activities are of no avail here. All actions, by their very nature and by the nature of the instruments involved such as the body, the mind, etc., are bound to be limited. And how can that which is unlimited and Infinite be a result of the limited and finite actions? It can never happen. When the cause is limited, the effect also is bound to be limited. Therefore, the scriptures pre- scribe Knowledge, the supreme Knowledge which eradicates the primeval nescience and thus destroys the root-cause of all sufferings. Here, both the means and the end are the same Knowledge Supreme. All 'doing' is realised as non- different from the 'Being'.

Action or doing is not only bodily but also mental. A thought comes under mental action. To do or not to do is not the question, because there is no choice in this matter. Man is forced to do action by the three gunas of prakriti the sattva, rajas and tamas. He cannot remain for a moment without doing action. But, he is given a choice in how to do the action that falls to his lot. He can do it either wisely or foolishly. Doing without the knowledge of the structure of the universe, is foolish action which causes bondage and doing with the knowledge, is wise action which helps him to free himself from bondage. So, we see action in one sense, seems to be the cause for both bondage and its destruction.

A little thought will reveal the most complicated nature of even the simplest of our actions. No action can be traced to any single cause. There will be a never ending chain of causes and effects behind every action, so much so, it is impossible to pin-point a particular cause for a particular effect. Every action is a cosmic incident. Some thinkers express this fact by saying that there is no particular cause for anything that happens. Everything just happens, they say. Some others would say that everything is done by God. Still others would say that whatever happens is according to the Cosmic plan. The whole universe

is His lila, sport- say Brahma Sutras. Tokavat-tu lila-kaivalyam-Creation is a mere sport or pastime for the Creator-God, like what we see in the world in the case of children" (II-1-3). All these mean the same thing.

The universe is an organic whole of which all parts are inextricably inter-connected. There is nothing which can stand separate from or external to this organic structure.

Feeling of any kind of difference or distinction in this 'whole', causes a disturbance in the original equilibrium, which sets up a series of reactions to restore the lost equilibrium, even as a pebble dropped on the calm surface of a lake disturbs the whole lake and a series of ripples in concentric circles is formed to restore the original calmness. Pleasure and pain are the results of the disturbance of the universal harmony by individualistic actions, to bring back the un- disturbed harmonious state.

5. Some hints on the Qualifications of a Seeker: The first step to be taken by the spiritual aspirant therefore is to give up the ideas of separation, the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' with their counterparts of 'you' and 'yours', 'he' and 'his', 'this' and 'that' and so on. These should give place to the feeling of universality. This first step itself is very difficult, almost impossible for the average man who is immersed in the sense world. A lot of preliminary preparation is therefore required before one can start real spiritual sadhana. The acquiring of the prescribed four-fold qualifications is a must for all sincere sadhakas. They are (1) proper discrimination between the Real and the unreal- the Absolute and all that is other to It; (2) dispassion born out of such discrimination-a feeling of contentment and satiation in all sense experiences and a conviction that this world cannot give real joy and peace; (3) virtues such as tranquillity of mind, judicious control over the activities of the senses and the organs of action, withdrawal from worldly activities done with attachment and selfish motives, fortitude or power of endurance, unshakable faith in God, Guru and scriptures and one-pointedness of mind on the spiritual Goal, in short, all virtues;

and (4) conscious, intense yearning for liberation from samsara, this life of never-ending birth, existence and death. In the language of the Ashtanga Yoga of Sage Patanjali, the qualifications constitute the first five limbs of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara which prepare the mind for concentration and meditation. It may be seen from the scriptures that in ancient days this great brahma-vidya, the knowledge of the Absolute was being imparted through instructions on meditations (vidyas or upasanas) on the cosmic deities. But now we do not grasp the meaning and the methodology of these vidyas or meditations even after hearing or reading it a thousand times and after being instructed by a teacher. Why? Because of lack of the required qualifications in the seekers and the lukewarm aspiration for Liberation in them. The words used in the scriptures for imparting this know- ledge appear to be too simple in our view. Still we are un- able to get the hidden Truth behind those apparently simple words. The preparatory disciplines that the disciples under- go before initiation, are more important than the actual words and other means used in teaching by one's own Master for the transmission of the Supreme Knowledge. The dictionary meanings of the words used by the teacher, are of not much use in this context. It is the Soul-force of the teacher that is transferred to the Soul of the disciple through the apparently simple words which carry tremendous A fund of wisdom lies deep spiritual force behind them. within the words.

The Kaivalya-upanishad says: tyagena eke amritat- vam-anasuh-only through renunciation one gets immortality (1-3). This renunciation is not renunciation of the house and family or for that matter, any object or objects constituting this universe. It is the renunciation of the mistaken notion about the universe, the 'I' and God. In ignorance we think that this universe is real as it appears to the senses and the mind, that it is separate from and is outside to one's Self. This erroneous but firm conviction in us, should be first replaced by bringing in its opposite, the right convict- ion that this universe as it appears to the

senses and the mind, is unreal but real as pure Consciousness, that it is one with the Self, and therefore, not different from and outside of the Self. Thereafter the mind should be freed of this conception also. All conceptualisation must cease. This is real renunciation which is effected through the practice of the vidyas or meditations. The same truth is expressed in the Katha-upanishad where it says: "avritta-chakshur-amritatvam-icchan-one who desires immortality should turn his senses and the mind inward" (II-1-i). The scriptures are replete with similar declarations regarding the importance of the qualification of the aspirant taking to the practice of meditation.

To acquire these qualifications is not an easy task. It is not like acquiring university degrees by reading a few books and reproducing them in the examination. To cite a simple instance: take the case of discrimination between right and wrong. There is no absolute right nor absolute wrong. Both are relative concepts and they depend on circumstance, place, time and so many other factors. That which is considered right in a particular country, at a particular time, under a particular circumstance, may be wrong when any of them changes. Why speak of different places, times and circumstances?

In the same place, at a particular time, under a given condition, it is difficult to say whether an action is right or wrong. There is a very interesting and instructive story on this subject. Once there were three pious persons leading an ideal life of truth, penance, charity and non-injury. It so happened that all the three left their mortal coils on the same day. Messengers from the heavens came and they were being taken in a divine chariot to the celestial worlds for awarding the fruits of their virtuous actions. The divine vehicle was just rising up from the earth. They saw down below on the earth, a snake with a frog in its mouth about to swallow it. One among the three said: "O poor frog, it is being killed by the cruel snake". He sympathised with the frog and thereby sinned against the snake forgetting that the snake was not at fault in taking its legitimate food. For this sin, he fell

down from the chariot. The second man seeing this said: "O the poor snake which has been starving for days, after all. got some food to satisfy its hunger". This remark of his also, though an expression of sympathy for the snake, was sinful because he indirectly approved the killing of the poor frog by the snake. Hence, he also fell down from the chariot. The third man seeing the fate of his two compan-ions, became wise and therefore kept mum. And the story says that he went to the heavens. Every action is like the action of the snake swallowing the frog. The wise sadhaka should transcend the concept of right and wrong in this phenomenal world, through wisdom, perfect knowledge of the cosmic Law which operates.

Similarly, he should go beyond likes and dislikes which arise from the concept of good and bad. Man generally considers some objects as dear and valuable, and hence, wants to possess them, nay hoard them as much as possible. The aspirant after liberation even in his early stages of sadhana, should realise through wise discrimination the perishable nature of all sense objects. The value that man attaches to objects is a false one due to superimposition by his mind. The object, as it is, is neither valuable nor value- less. Take gold for example. It is considered to be one among the most valuable objects. This value is nothing but a superimposition of the mind. It is true that all people in all countries make this superimposition. This fact will not make gold 'really' valuable. If suppose all the people and all the governments of the world agree for some reason that from tomorrow onwards that gold will have no value, then it loses its value and no one thereafter will desire to hoard that metal. The Bhagavad-gita says that the wise man considers gold, a clod of earth and a piece of stone as of equal value,-sama loshtasma-kanchanah (XIV-24). It is said Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa during his early period practised this sadhana. He would keep a piece of gold coin on one hand and a stone on the other. He would throw away the stone into the Ganges and then the gold coin. A couple, vanaprasthis, leading an ascetic life preparatory to

embracing the sannyasa order, were walking in the forest. The husband was walking in front and the wife was following him at a little distance behind. The husband saw a shining bar of gold on the path. He thought, "if my wife sees this, her mind will be attracted by it. I should not allow this to happen". Thinking thus, he covered it with some mud. The wife who joined him after a few seconds, had noticed her husband's action. She could fathom the good motive behind his action. She asked her husband: "My dear, why are you covering earth by earth?" Hearing this the husband blushed and understood that while he had still the feeling of difference between gold and earth, his wife was free from it and that she had much more dispassion and equal vision than him-self.

All spiritual practices including meditation lead to self- control. The real Self is not in need of any control. It is the lower self, the body-self, the mind-self and intellect- self that is referred to as the 'self' in the expression 'self- control'. Sense-control and mind-control may be said to be interdependent. Sense-control will not succeed without the cooperation of the mind and the mind cannot be quietened as long as the senses are extroverted and pulled by their respective objects. Of the five senses, the ear, eye, nose, palate and sex, the last two are comparatively difficult to control. The power of attraction these two organs exert on their corresponding objects, and the power of the pull from the side of the objects exercised on these two sense organs, are both very strong. When by some means the aspirants manage to control the other three senses, these two senses get out of their control. It would seem that the three senses while appearing to have been controlled, might have really gone underground and secretly joined with the two senses, the palate and sex. Between these two very strong and difficult to subjugate, sex may be said to be stronger than the palate. Those spiritual aspirants who try to control their senses forcibly and suppress them through will power at the very outset without knowing their real strength, without an understanding

of their mysterious power and their innate connection with oneself, fail miserably in controlling the sex urge which is really the limited form of the cosmic power behind creation. No amount of physical control will be of any avail here. The sadhaka should re- sort to sublimation and not suppression. One may think that old age is free from this difficulty. By age we mean the age of the present physical gross body. But the sense organs do not belong to the gross body. They form part of the subtle body. The subtle body is as old as ignorance which is it cause. Ignorance is beginningless. The differ- ence between the age of the subtle body in a youth and that in an old man is, therefore, negligible, practically nil. Discriminative knowledge of the nature of the Self and the non-Self is the only sure means for success in sense sub- limation. The uphill task in sense control, especially sex control, and the risk of a fall even in the advanced stages of one's spiritual practice, is illustrated in scriptures. The stories of Visvamitra and Menaka, of Jaimini and Vyasa, etc., are to the point. Those who have read Avadhuta-gita of Lord Dattatreya, a superb exposition of the highest state of Consciousness of a realised Soul, would remember how at the very end of the concluding chapter, the Lord deals with the necessity of sex sublimation through self-control. A very apt and telling illustration is given therein:

agnikunda-sama nari ghrita-kumbha-samo narah,

samsargena viliyeta tasmat-tam parivarjayet.

gaudi madhvi tatha paishti vijneya trividha sura,

chaturthi stri sura jneya yayedam mohitam jagat. -

Herein man and woman are compared to a pot full of ghee and a pit full of blazing fire. Even by nearness to fire, ghee melts and flows into the fire causing the fire to blaze forth more and both get destroyed. Even so, any kind of asso- ciation of one with the other leads to great downfall, and We know three therefore, should be completely avoided. kinds of intoxicants, viz., the spirituous liquors prepared from

the sugar cane, honey and wheat or rice flour. But there is another, the fourth, the sex by which the whole world is deluded (VIII-24 and 25). Further expatiation on this would only be superfluous.

6. Direct Realisation: In giving expression to the direct realisation of the supreme Reality which is beyond mind and speech, sages naturally differ in their language and manner of expression. Such differences cannot be avoided, because of the unique nature of the Reality which trancends thought and expression. Some would say that one should not think in meditation. Others would at once raise the question: 'If nothing is felt and nothing is thought of, then what exactly is one's experience?'. The reply to this would be that there is no experience in meditation in the last stages, because even experience is a function of the mind which involves the triad of experiencer, experience and the experienced which is to be transcended. 'But this is a negative attitude', would be the counter-argument of those who consider that the test of success in meditation is the return from it with a sort of great satisfaction or delight and that it is not a vacuum or void and that all our discussion of Truth should not go merely on verbal and logical definitions and conclusions but on practical experience. When the question of 'what happens in the deep sleep?' is dis- cussed, the same difficulty arises. Because the discussion is started after waking and not while sleeping. Whether there is or not any trace or seed of ignorance in deep sleep, can be answered in both ways according to the standpoint taken by the one who replies to the question. The questioner and the replier are both in the waking state where it is supposed that the ignorance is in its full play. If both are sages who have known the Truth, such questions will not arise at all for discussion. If the replier is a sage and the questioner is a sadhaka, the former is said to come down to the level of the latter who is still in the realm of the mind and speech and give an answer in that level, although from the standpoint of the former he is always established in his own essential nature, the non-dual Absolute.

The sruti is not tired of pointing out the difficulty to explain It to another. The last word is 'neti, neti-not this, not this' which is followed by mauna the 'Great Silence', the Silence referred to in one of the verses in praise of the Supreme in the form of Dakshinamurti:

"chitram vatataror-mule vriddhah sishyah gurur-yuva,

gurostu maunam vyakhyanam sishyastu chhinna sam-sayah-

Lo! A wonder at the foot of that yonder banyan tree!

Aged and gray haired disciples sitting at the lotus feet of a preceptor who is in the prime of youth, quite contrary to what is generally observed in the world where the disciples are young in age and the preceptor aged. Again, the ex- position given by the preceptor at the foot of the banyan tree is through 'Silence', which also is a strange phenomenon, as the usual custom followed by preceptors is to give eloquent sermons in explaining the scriptures. In spite of the 'silent' teaching of this preceptor, the disciples are completely freed of all doubts and they derive supreme satisfaction. A wonder of wonders indeed". The supreme Truth, Its attainment and Its transmission from the preceptor to the disciple, are mysterious and therefore said to be wonderful. The great Preceptor of all preceptors who is at the root of this big banyan tree of this universe, who is always young because time does not age Him, being beyond space and time, instructs the highest Knowledge through 'Silence', because It is beyond the realm of thought and speech. He is always instructing us remaining in the 'heart' of every being, the root of the banyan tree of life. We do not hear his silent exposition because of the din When the senses together and uproar caused by the senses. with the mind are silenced through meditation, we will hear the silent exposition of the preceptor Dakshinamurti, the supreme Brahman and all doubt will be rent asunder, resulting in aparoksha'nubhuti, Direct Experience. Certain- ly, a wonder of all wonders!

The Absolute is the Being that is left after the negation of all this, the subject and object conceived of by the mind. It is the limit of all negations as well as affirmations. It is not all this, and yet It is all this, and transcends all this. It is the meditation on this Absolute that one should practise and It is also the end and aim of all meditations. Before one starts this meditation, one should have a firm and full 'understanding' of It which is brahma-jnana, the knowledge of the Supreme. If this 'understanding' or 'knowledge' gives one the final freedom from the miseries of this world, the question of meditation does not arise for him. His knowledge is Meditation and Meditation is Know- ledge. The other cases, where the understanding remains in the intellectual level only and has not transcended the intellect, meditation has to be practised till the knots of the heart, avidya, kama and karma are untied and loosened. The nature of meditation to be practised should be accord- ing to one's temperament and the stage of evolution (invol- ution?).

7. Place of meditation in Sadhana: There is a lot of academic discussion, even among the Advaitins, about the place of meditation in the scheme of Self-realisation or the final Liberation. Some assert with great force that it is jnana, the supreme Knowledge that gives the final blow to the ajnana which is the root-cause of all sufferings and that meditation may help the aspirant in the earlier stages to attain this jnana. Others assert with equal or perhaps greater force that in the vast majority of the aspirants, meditation is inevitable and unavoidable up to the final stage, to attain that supreme Knowledge, and therefore, meditation should not be relegated a subordinate place with reference to Knowledge. To them jnana-yoga and dhyana-yoga are complementary in as much as without dhyana none can practically attain direct Knowledge, aparoksha-jnana which term is a synonym for Liberation.

The part played by meditation may be said to be two- fold. First in its preliminary stage, it prepares the ground for the dawn of the final

illumination, and then it takes the aspirant to the last step in the ladder of spiritual practice in which the unreal ajnana is completely destroyed, as it were. This destruction of ajnana is figuratively known as liberation. It depends on the qualifications possessed by the aspirant.

Sri Suresvaracharya in his Naishkarmya-siddhi, II-2 and 3, refers to four classes of aspirants who attain liberation. The first class aspirant attains liberation suddenly by the complete disappearance of the phenomenal world along with its cause, ajnana. The example is hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Person. No second example can be cited for reasons obvious. The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad (I-4-i and ii) says that hiranyagarbha is the first-born who finds nothing besides Himself and whose birth is a perfected one with the knowledge of unity, even without any instruction, due to the result of meditation practised in His previous lives. An effect of ignorance somehow crept in for a moment and it disappeared the next moment due to His knowledge. Under the second class, come those who get illumination by merely hearing the final The example instruction from the preceptor only once.

given is that of a ghost which remaining in the flag post of Arjuna's chariot in the Mahabharata war, heard the Lord's instruction to Arjuna which forms the immortal Bhagavad-gita, and attained sadyo-mukti, immediate liberation. It is stated that this incident is given in the Jaimini Mahabharata. Under the third class are those who through a process of penance in the form of study and meditation on the instructions given by the preceptor, attain the final saving Knowledge. An example is Bhrigu who heard from his father Varuna that the Supreme is That from which all this appears to emanate into being, in which after emanation appears to exist, and into which, in the end, appears to get merged, then practised penance and realised the Truth in the end (Taittiriya-upanishad III). The fourth class of aspirants are those who are instructed by the preceptors more than once and who

ponder over what they hear and meditate on it and thereby attain the supreme Knowledge. An example for this is Svetaketu who hears the mahavakya, tat-tvam-asi nine times from his father-preceptor (Chhandogya-upanishad VI). That the first, third and fourth cases are due to chance and the second involves meditation on the mahavakya heard from the preceptor, and that meditation signified by the term prasamkhyana is involved in the mahavakya, is the prima facie view put forth by the Acharya. This view he transcends and arrives at the final conclusion that prasamkhyana is not enjoined in the maha- vakya which at once imparts the final saving Knowledge on the qualified aspirant hearing it from his spiritual preceptor. The Acharya, however, assigns a place for meditation, in the earlier stages of sadhana (Naishkarmya Siddhi III-125).

Now let us see what the great sages Sri Vyasa and Sri Acharya Sankara have to say on this question. In his Brahma Sutras, Vyasa gives his opinion in the aphorisms avrittirasa- krid-upadesat and lingaccha which literally mean that re- petition is necessary since the Upanishads instruct repeatedly and since there is the indicatory mark (IV-1-i and ii). In his commentary on these Aphorisms, Acharya Sankara reconciles both the views. He refers to the Upanishadic texts: "The Self, my dear, should be realised-should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon' (Brihadaranyaka-upani- shad IV-5-vi); 'Knowing about this Self alone, the intelligent aspirant after Brahman should attain intuitive Know- ledge; he should not reflect upon many words that are tiring to the organ of speech' (Ibid IV-4-xxi); 'He should be sought, Him one should desire to understand', (Chhandogya-upanishad VIII-7-i), and similar other texts. His arguments and conclusion may be summarised as follows:

Repeated instruction as 'should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon' indicates a repetition of the mental act which has to culminate in the intuitive realisation of Brahman. Both the words upasana, continuous meditation, worship and adoration, and

nididhyasana, profound meditation, imply acts involving meditation, a repetition of the mental act. The words 'vid' which literally means 'to know' and 'upas' which literally rendered into English would be 'to sit near' or 'to meditate', are seen to be used in the Upanishads interchangeably. Some Upanishadic texts start with 'vid' (Chhandogya-upanishad IV-1-iv) and end with upas' (Ibid IV-2-ii). Some others start with 'upas' (Ibid III- 18-i) and end with 'vid' (Ibid III- 18-iii). Quoting other Upanishadic texts, the Acharya shows that meditation in the form of repeated mental acts, is assumed as an establish- ed fact. Generally, realisation of the Supreme, the experience of the identity of Brahman and the Atman, does not result from a single hearing. Repetition of the mental vritti 'I am Brahman' after hearing the mahavakya, tat- tvam-asi, will be unnecessary for one who can realise the Self as Brahman after hearing the mahavakya once only. But to one who cannot do so, repetition is necessary as seen in the case of the example of Svetaketu and Bhrigu cited above. The argument that if the mahavakya, tat- tvam-asi uttered once cannot bring about realisation of its real indicative meaning, then it will not be able to do so even when repeated many times in meditation, is met with by the Acharya by replying that though it is a logical argument, nothing is illogical about facts directly perceived. Among the aspirants, how many realise the Supreme by once hearing the Truth from the preceptor?-asks the great Acharya. This is ample proof for insisting on meditation on the vast majority for the attainment of the supreme Knowledge which bestows final liberation.

Even in the case of hiranyagarbha quoted as an example for the first class aspirant who gets sudden supreme illumination, He must have practised meditation on hiranyagarbha in his previous incarnation. Scriptures say that one who practises meditation on hiranyagarbha becomes hiranya- garbha. Similarly, in the case of the ghost in the post of Arjuna's chariot, which was liberated by hearing once the instructions of the Lord, the reasonable presumption is that it should

have practised meditation and removed all the obstacles such as ignorance, doubt and confusion, in its previous births.

8. Fruits of meditation: The attainment through the practice of vidyas is said to be identification with the particular deity on whom meditation is practised. It is other- wise called attainment of the worlds of the deities. These are called heavenly worlds. Among these heavenly worlds, there are the lower and the higher worlds. The lower consists of the worlds of the celestials such as indra, agni, vayu, varuna, etc., the presiding deities of the elements, who are also said to be the presiding deities in the various limbs in the body of the meditator. These heavenly worlds generally mentioned in the puranas may be said to be similar to this sense world, but the joy there is said to be much more in quantity and quality compared to the worldly pleasures. The enjoyment there is without effort, for one is enjoying the fruits of one's meritorious works performed in this world. When this merit gets exhausted, one is born again in this world because of the balance of karma in stock, the sanchita-karma as it is called. The higher, perhaps the highest heavenly world is that of hiranyagarbha referred to in the Upanishads. This is attained through meditation on the vital force, mind and intellect in their universal aspects. This world of hiranyagarbha is said to be free of hunger and thirst, old age and death. This experience one attains through the highest meditation.

The following doubt may arise in the mind of the seekers: The sruti emphatically declares that the Supreme, the nondual Being, the unmoded Consciousness is beyond the reach of speech and mind. It is neither any of the objects known, nor is It the unknown. None of the senses can reach It. It is not anything that people worship and meditate upon. Further, if the seeker thinks or says that he has known Brahman well enough, then he can be certain that he has known very little about It. It is known to him to whom It is unknown and he to whom It is known does not know (Kenopanishad I and II). Under these conditions, it is impossible to get brahma-jnana, the Knowledge

Supreme. To start meditation, the mind requires an object or a concept at least. Since Brahman is attributeless, it is impossible to meditate on It. Thus neither is it possible to get a complete knowledge about the Supreme, which is said to bestow liberation, nor is it possible to meditate on the Supreme.

A flood of light is thrown on this by Sri Swami Vidyaranya in chapter IX dhyana-dipa of his work Pancha- dasi. He says that all these are not very serious difficulties to a sincere seeker. Through reasoning and profuse citations from the scriptures he establishes that the spiritual aspirant who has proper discrimination and right dispassion and who has a preceptor, can realise Brahman which is his own Self through knowledge as well as through medita- tion. He should first have a firm intellectual conviction that Brahman is, the Absolute is, which the scriptures speak about and then the conviction that This is his own self. This knowledge got through the study of the scriptures and reflection is indirect knowledge which can be acquired by all provided they have faith (sraddha) in the scriptures and Masters. What has thus been intellectually ascertained through study, through reasoning and enquiry, has to be realised through deep meditation. As long as the delusion of identifying oneself with the body exists, the seeker can- not become established in the Self. For getting indirect knowledge of the non-dual nature of the Self, perception of duality in the form of this world is no obstruction, even as perception of the blueness in the sky is no obstruction to the knowledge of those who know for certain that the sky is not blue in colour. Enquiry of the supreme Truth never goes in vain. If it does not bear fruit in this birth, it will certainly in the next or future birth. The realisation attained by Sage Vamadeva while in the mother's womb (vide vamadeva-vidya) and Sage Bharata in three births (vide Srimad Bhagavatam) are only two examples to the point. There are many more. All impediments must be re- moved before realisation dawns. Binding attachment to sense objects, dullness of the intellect, indulgence in im- proper and non-scriptural

arguments, are arguments, are some of the obstructions which should be removed by the practice of self-control.

9. Meditation and Knowledge: One who cannot praetise enquiry on the Self, the Atman-Brahman, should resort to concentration and meditation. As one always thinks on objects one loves and to which one is attached, even so one I who has love for the Supreme, can meditate on Brahman with attributes or without attributes. In meditation, the mind takes the form of the object meditated upon. One can start with meditation on the deities and gradually pass on to meditation on virat, hiranyagarbha and finally isvara, and the Supreme as prescribed in the vidyas. Meditation on the idea 'I am beyond speech and mind' will lead one to the final Goal. This pratyaya does not invest the Atman with attributes. The Atman-Brahman is beyond saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (without attributes). He is also neither and at the same time both and transcends all.

While the scriptures say that Brahman or the Atman cannot become an object of knowledge or of meditation, It being the supreme Subject, in the same breath the very same scriptures also declare that It can be known, meditated upon and realised through a purified mind, a mind devoid of desires.

For purposes of meditation, all positive qualities attributed to the Absolute such as Bliss, Consciousness, Existence, Infinitude, etc., given in the several Upanishads should be combined. Similarly if one practises the 'neti, neti' method, one should combine all such negative attributes such as 'not gross', 'not subtle', 'not causal', etc. (Brahma Sutra III-3-xi and xxiii). All attributes and attributeless- ness are only indications, and therefore, neither of them affect adversely the non-dual, absolute nature of the Supreme. Finally leaving off both the presence and absence of attributes, one should meditate: "That I am', without the notion of externality and universality in regard to "That' and with- out the notion of internality and individuality with reference to 'I'.

Supreme Knowledge is vastu tantra. It depends on Brahman alone and not on the meditator. Such knowledge by its mere revelation, destroys the nescience responsible for the erroneous notion of the sense of reality in the phenomena. sravana, manana, and nididhyasana properly practised by a qualified disciple under the guidance of a preceptor, cause the dawn of samyagjnana, the knowledge of the Absolute which none can prevent. The disciple is bestowed with the final Freedom, even if he does not want It. Such Knowledge, by the mere fact of its rising, destroys all ideas of the sense of reality of the world separate from the Self and the aspirant becomes liberated in the present life and awaits wearing out of his fructifying karmas in the form of his body and its cheshtas, involuntary movements.

On the other hand, meditation depends on the aspirant who meditates putting his faith in the instructions of the teacher and the scriptures. He should continue meditation until he realises his identity with the object of meditation and then continue the same thought till death. Meditation is therefore said to be purusha-tantra dependent on the He may do it, may not do it or will of the meditator. may do it in a different way. A man of meditation performs his worldly duties with a certain amount of indifference, since much concentration on them is likely to affect his meditation adversely.

Sri Sankaracharya in his introductory remarks to his commentary on the Chhandogya-upanishad, gives the distinction between non-dualistic realisation (advaita-jnana) and meditation (upasana). He raises the question: Where lies the difference between the two? The answer given by him is: The realisation of the non-dual Absolute whose very nature transcends all action and inaction, does away with the difference among the falsely superimposed concepts of doership, of instruments of action and also of actions and their results. He cites the example of the rope and snake where a rope is mistaken for a snake in semi-darkness. The right knowledge of the rope dawns when it is illumined by a light which at once removes the falsely

superimposed snake. No meditation on the false snake or on the real rope is involved. Similar is the case with non-dualistic realisation (advaita-jnana).But as far as meditation (upasana) is concerned, it establishes a continuous flow of similar modification of the mind in relation to some object prescribed in the scriptures, uninterrupted by foreign ideas. This is the difference between the two-says the Acharya. The epithet vidya can mean both the supreme, non-dualistic Knowledge (jnana) and also meditation (upasana).

Again, in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras (I-1-xii), the great Acharya makes a distinction between the two and says that Brahman is to be meditated on with the help of Its relation with the limiting adjuncts and known without the help of that relation.

A man of Knowledge who has realised the Reality be- hind the world-phenomena, fulfils his worldly duties to perfection as they do not come into conflict with his supreme Knowledge. To perform worldly activities, it is not essential that the world should be real as such. Even while one is fully convinced that the world is phenomenal, dream-like, one can perform his allotted duties to perfection with all his senses and mind in full swing, just as an actor in a drama acts his part very well, all the while knowing that it is a piece of false show. To know a pot, the mind need not be controlled. As a pot once known, remains always known, Brahman also once 'known' through samyag-jnana, remains always 'known', It being one's own self-effulgent Self. From Knowledge alone results complete Freedom, proclaims the scriptures. By the strength of meditation on Brahman, saguna or nirguna, one attains Knowledge which bestows final Liberation.

Does a full-blown jnanin require meditation to prevent his mind being drawn towards sense objects? No, is the answer, for there is no objection for the Knower to be en- gaged in them. He knows fully well that they are his own projections, waves of Consciousness. He is above the in- junctions of the Vedas in regard to karmas and upasanas which are meant for those who identify themselves with their bodies, their

social status and stages in life. He knows that all of them are creations of the illusory power of his mind and that they are related to the body and mind and not to the Self, the pure Consciousness which he really is. A knower of Brahman whose heart is freed of all attachments is a liberated Soul, whether he meditates or not, whether he does action or not. These merely depend on his fructifying karmas that have given birth to his present body which is seen by others. "If one is a knower of Truth, whether he be engaged in constant action or in contemplation, does his mind ever lose the state of samadhi? No, the enlightened ones are for ever in samadhi, even though they engage themselves in the affairs of the world" says the Yoga Vasishtha in its story of Suraghu and Parigha in the Upasama Prakarana. This being the state of a liberated sage, how can another man recognise his real condition? For all outward appearances, he looks like any other man. So it is said by the wise that one should become a Sage one- self before one can judge another whether the latter has realised the Self or not.

To reach the pinnacle of yoga and jnana, a gradation of steps is prescribed. To start with one should restrain from all sinful actions. Leaving off the gross sense life, an animal life of eating, drinking and sleeping, one should engage oneself in good and meritorious actions prescribed in the scriptures. The next higher step is the worship of a personal deity. Still higher step in the gradation is meditation on hirayagarbha, the saguna-brahman. The last step is meditation on the attributeless Brahman, because It is nearest to the Absolute. Meditation on the attributeless Brahman results in the dawn of samyag-jnana which is the same as direct realisation of the Self.

How can meditation on personal deities and on saguna- brahman, Brahman with attributes, such as the concepts of virat and hiranyagarbha, and on even the attributeless nirguna-brahman, help one to attain the Absolute which trans- cends all characteristics such as 'with attributes' and 'with- out attributes'? All meditations are within the realm of duality and involve the distinctions of the triad in

the form of meditator, meditation and the object of meditation. The Supreme is beyond all dualities and triads. A logical explanation is given by Swami Vidyaranya through the analogy of leading error, samvadi-bhrama. In certain cases, a procedure adopted based on an error, leads to immense gain and the error, therefore, becomes knowledge productive of result. A man sees a ray of light from a distance. He runs to the place from which the light emanates and to his surprise finds a valuable gem. The ray of light is not the gem. He goes along the line of the ray alone, but in the end attains a gem. Another poor man while walking in the wood, loses a paltry coin. He retraces his way and goes on searching for the coin. And accidentally he gets a treasure. Similarly, meditation on saguna and nirguna Brahman leads the meditator to the Highest, the Absolute, which transcends both saguna and nirguna aspects. All triads merge, the dualities disappear, the subject and object coalesce into the non-dual infinite Being.

samkhya-yogadhigamyam-to be attained by knowledge and meditation, is the Supreme. That Supreme which is reached by the jnanis, Knowers, is reached also by the yogins who practise meditation. Both samkhya and yoga are one in that both take the practitioner to the ultimate Goal. In meditation on any object, one identifies with the object of meditation. This is what happens in all forms of genuine meditations. What is the objection to presume the same result from the meditation on Brahman with attributes and without attributes superimposed on It!

The place and purpose of karma, upasana and jnana in the scheme of God-realisation, is given in a simple verse in "Vedanta-Dimdimah" which says:

"Karmani chitta-suddhyartham ekagryartham-upasanam, mokshartham brahma-vijnanam iti vedanta dimdimah- karmas (actions) are for purification of the mind, upasana (worship and meditation) for concentration and one-pointed- ness of the mind and

jnana (the Supreme Knowledge of Brahman) for moksha (Liberation)- thus proclaims vedanta with tom-tom".

10. Some help to Aspirants: The Upanishads give a number of meditations. This does not mean that one aspirant should practise all of them. The different meditations are intended for men in different levels of evolution (involution?). The sincere sadhaka should get himself initiated into that particular vidya which is best suited to him, by his guru, an adept in that vidya. If the sadhaka himself is not able to choose the best one for him, he should get the guidance of his guru in the matter. The confidence with which the 'Seers' of these meditations tell us about the great efficacy of these vidyas, is really marvellous and will certainly create sraddha in the mind of the spiritually hungry aspirants. The modern mind especially of the younger generation influenced by foreign ideas and ideals, may revolt at the very concept of these meditations. But the faithful few will not find any difficulty in grasping the truth of the statements of the Seers of the Vedic period who have given us these meditations. It is however beyond the ken of the extroverted and the sense-ridden who revel in the filth of the sense objects which are mistaken for sources of pleasure and happiness. They are ignorant of the truth that the real source of happiness, even the sense-happi- ness, is not the sense object but one's own Self, the great treasure-house of Bliss, the ocean of sat-chit-ananda.

The object suggested for meditation in the vidyas is not of much importance. Any object is as good as any other object for the purpose of meditation. It may be as great and vast as hiranyagarbha and isvara or as small and limited as the limited space in the physical heart in oneself. It may be on the concept of Brahman Itself, or on common, well known objects like the sun, the directions, the mind, etc. In meditation, one eliminates through his intellect the name and form in the object chosen for meditation. All objects of meditation-really they are only concepts in the mind-shorn of their names and forms, reveal

their true nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss- Absolute. It is true that scriptures prescribe meditation on concrete objects and also on subtle concepts, easily grasp- able by the mind, because in the early stages, the neophytes will find them easy to contemplate upon. But later on, they have to superimpose on that object or concept chosen for meditation, the characteristics of universality, infinity and eternity which are more approximate to the nature of the Absolute. The secret of all meditations is acquiring one-pointedness of the mind, by collecting all the dissipated rays and concentrating on the chosen object of meditation. As all rivers take you to the ocean, all objects can take All roads lead to Rome, goes the you to the Supreme. common adage. Even so, meditation on any object leads the meditator to the goal of God-Realisation. Every object or concept may be said to be a part of the whole which the Absolute is, although the Absolute is partless and indivisible. When I touch a limb of my friend, I touch my friend. When I touch a bud at the tip end of a small twig in a banyan tree, I am in contact with the whole gigantic tree. In all meditations, irrespective of the object chosen for meditation, one should hold on to the concept of the 'Whole' which is inclusive of all objects including the parti- cular object of meditation. The mind should not enter- tain the idea of finitude, limited nature, name, form and other attributes of the object, but cling on to the in- finitude of the 'Whole'. The object is only a prop given to the mind to help meditation in the beginning stages. Scriptures sometimes refer to ishta in connection with meditation. This word generally means that which is liked most. But this liking in the case of the object of meditation should not be confused with the sense attach- ment. It is one's tutelary deity on whose name and form, the infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss nature of the Absolute is superimposed.

One should practise meditation with unconditioned love for Ged.

Meditation should not be one among the many acts done during the day or night, all of which have some limited purpose to achieve. If one

has a similar limited pur- pose in meditation also, then one cannot achieve success, as God would become inferior to that purpose. God would become an instrument or means to achieve that purpose which has taken the place of the Goal. This mistake should not be committed by the sincere seeker of God. One should not think that after reaching God one will get 'something'. For, then that 'something' becomes more impotrant than God, even if that something be given such names as peace, bliss, freedom from mortality, etc.

The serious students should practise these meditations only under the guidance of their spiritual guru. The nece- ssity of a guru cannot be overstressed. Even for secular knowledge a teacher is necessary. This is the experience of all. Who has studied arithmetic, geography, science, astro- nomy and such other objective sciences without the help of a teacher? In all these, the subject of study is something objective which the intellect can grasp. But in the case of brahma-vidya, Brahman which is considered to be the 'object' of knowledge or meditation, can never become an 'object'. It is not even the subject. It is one's own inner- most Self beyond the reach of the intellect and at the same time the infinite, transcendental Absolute beyond the duality of subject and object. How can one get the knowledge of this Supreme without the help of the Master? It is im- possible. Here one may raise the question: "How, then, does the Master attain this transcendental knowledge and how does he impart it to the disciple?" It is a mystery. It cannot be explained in words but it does happen. Men do attain this knowledge of Brahman, may be very rare. Such rare fortunate souls do impart this Knowledge to their It is not one man worthy disciples who are rarer still. imparting knowledge to another man. It is the Soul of the guru entering into the Soul of the disciple. The communication is not through words, although the ground is pre-pared through the oral instructions of the guru and the study of the scriptures. The sincere and earnest disciple should be ready to surrender his ego completely to the guru and make his mind

thoroughly empty, when this knowledge flows freely, as it were, from the guru into the disciple, even as air rushes in a vacuum. If the field to be watered is in a higher level than the tank or reservoir from which water is to flow or if the former is filled with mud and earth, we know water will never flow into it whatever be the effort one puts forth. Therefore, the disciple should make complete self-surrender to the Master and merge the mind in its source, when this supreme Knowledge flows freely from the guru. This is the secret of success in the spiritual path.

The disciple should consider his guru as God himself. Once a disciple approached a sage and said: "O holy Master, please accept me as your disciple". The master knowing that the man was not fully mature in mind and was still having great attachment to the sense-world, said: "My dear man, I am willing to be your guru. I will first tell you who the guru is. Please listen: guru is brahma, guru is vishnu, guru is siva, guru is everything, He is really the supreme Brahman. Now, are you ready to accept me as your guru?" He thought for a moment and silently left the place. His ego which had not been curbed and thinned out, could not accept the above description of the guru. "If the guru is everything, then what am I? Where am I? Am I a non-entity? Am I not the disciple? Have I not at least that place? I can however accept the guru as superior to me. How can he be everything, Brahman himself whom I am searching for and whom I want to attain. How can this man with a body like mine be Brahman?" Such thoughts that may arise in many of the young seekers, are the obstructions for complete surrender to the guru.

There are persons who deny the necessity of a guru. Scriptures also in certain contexts say that there is neither the guru nor the disciple, neither bondage nor liberation, neither creation nor dissolution, neither an aspirant nor the liberated. These statements of the great ones and the scriptures are not addressed to the neophytes who enter the spiritual path. They describe that ultimate state of realisation of

the non-dual Absolute, the state that should be 'reached' or 'attained' by the disciple with the help of the guru and the scriptures. In that Plenum, the Infinite, not only guru and scriptures vanish but the disciple also vanishes. As long as the disciple is there aspiring for liberation, the guru and scriptures are also there, and must be there to help him to attain his Goal. Even animals and birds can teach the earnest seekers. The guru who is non-different from God and one's own Self, can appear in any form. In the Chhandogya-upanishad, instances are cited where the guru appeared as a bull, a diver-bird, a swan, and fire and instructed the disciples on the higher truths, when their mind became completely purified and the ego raced to the ground through karmayoga and service to the guru.

Regarding the final result that accrues from the practice of these vidyas, let us bring to our mind the declarations of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who has brought to light for the modern world, the purest gems from the depths of the ocean of spiritual literature in his innumerable publications in the form of books, booklets, pamphlets and articles in various journals; those of the great Acharya Sankara, the greatest expounder of the secret teachings of the scriptures and of the Vedic Sage Badarayana also called Vyasa and Krishna Dvaipayana, the celebrated author of the eighteen puranas, the Maha-Bharata, the great epic and the Brahma-Sutras.

Sri Gurudev says: "All the vidyas lead one from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to light, from mortality to Immortality. They lead the Soul from the mula-ajnana to the highest Brahman, either through krama-mukti or sudyo-mukti". Sri Sankaracharya says: "It is a settled matter that those who through perfect Knowledge have dispelled all mental darkness and are devoted to the eternally perfect nirvana do not return. And as those who rely on the Knowledge of saguna-brahman, in the end have re- course to that nirvana, it follows that they also do not re- turn" (Vide his commentary on Brahma Sutras IV-4-xxii). Sri Vyasa Bhagavan also has come to the conclusion that on the

final dissolution of the world of the conditioned Brah- man, those who have attained that world through meditation attain along with the Lord of the world, what is higher than that conditioned Brahman i.e. the unconditioned Brah- man (Brahma Sutras IV-3-x).

The following mantras should always be kept in mind:

(1) tam yatha yatha upasate tad-eva bhavati-one becomes just what one meditates Him to be (Mudgalopanishad-3).

(2) atha khalu kratumayah purushah, yatha karatur- asmin loke purusho-bhavati tathetah pretya bhavati-as is one's faith in this world, one becomes such on departing hence, for as is one's faith and determination, such indeed one is (Chhandogya-upanishad III-14-i).

(3) yam yam vapi smaran-bhavam tyajatyante kalevaram, tam tamevaiti kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah-O Arjuna, on whatever being (a particular deity) one has his mind (one meditates) at the time of leaving this body, he reaches that being whose thought has been constantly dwelt upon (Bhagavad-Gita VIII-6).

(4) mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha-mokshayoh, bandhaya vishayasaktam muktyair-nirvishayam smritam- Mind is the cause for both bondage and liberation; the mind attached to objects is in bondage and the mind which is free of attachment is liberated-this is the declaration (Satyayaniya-upanishad-1).

(5) yam bhavam darsayet yasya tam bhavam sa tu pasyati; tam chavati sa bhutva'sau tad-grahah samupaiti tam Anyone who following the teacher's instructions meditates on a particular object, sees that alone. And that too protects him by becoming identified with him. That absorption leads to his Self-identity (Mandukya Karika II-29).

Those who practise meditation should not forget that the various symbols of Brahman such as vaisvanara, virat, sun, ether, prana, mind, and so on, are props for the mind to lean upon in the early stages. The mind becomes one-pointed and subtle through meditations on such

symbols. The ultimate aim and objects of all vidyas, is the attainment of Brahman, freedom from the thraldom of samsara, the illusion of the world. One has to adore Brahman, the Absolute, in and through the symbols given in the vidyas, at the same time taking care to see that they (the symbols) do not usurp His place. The difference in the vidyas is only from the view point of the difference in the symbols. The Goal, being the Absolute, is the same in all vidyas, whether the meditation is on Brahman with or without attributes or any of His lower manifestations. Attributelessness is also an attribute of Brahman, as already stated. The meditator should avoid the mistakes of thinking that his object of meditation and Goal of meditation are different from his Self.

11. A few words about this book: This book "The Supreme Knowledge' contains one hundred and one vidyas taken from the 12 Upanishads- Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Svetasvatara and Kaushitaki. It deals with the subject of the Supreme, the Absolute, the Para-Brah- man, also referred to by the epithet the Atman-Brahman. It attempts to present an exposition of the Supreme and to serve as a means to Its realisation, the realisation of all the four human aspirations (1) a righteous living in consonance with dharma, the cosmic law, (2) earning of material wealth, artha (3) fulfilment of legitimate desires, kama and (4) final Liberation moksha. By the proper study of the book and grasp of the import therein, one would realise the Truth and attain liberation, complete freedom from the shackles of this mundane life. The book is intended to be read and studied by those who have the fourfold qualifications (already mentioned), though not fully, at least to an appreciable degree.

The vidyas taken from each of these Upanishads are grouped under one section. Thus the book contains twelve sections. These vidyas of the Upanishads deal with upasana and jnana. Here, we once again give a citation from Sri San- karacharya, which we have given under

anandamaya-vidya and also in the earlier portion of this Introduction. The great Acharya, the foremost propounder of the advaita philosophy, in his monumental commentary of the Brahma Sutras,

says: ekam-api brahma'-pekshit-opadhi-sambandham cha vedanteshu padisyata iti-The meaning of the book is proceeded with in order to show that although Brahman is one, It is spoken of in the Upanishads as either to be meditated on with the help of its relation with limiting adjuncts, or to be known without the help of its relation with the limiting adjuncts" (I-1-xii). The wise say that the Absolute non-dual Brahman is known in two aspects, one as possessed of the limiting adjuncts constituted of all the diversities of the universe, and the other devoid of all conditioning factors and as though opposed to the earlier. That which is considered different from the Absolute is finite and qualified and that which is different from the finite and qualified, is the Absolute. Hence, it is in the state of ignorance of the nature of the Absolute alone, can come upasana, meditation, comprising the various objects of meditation with or without ritualistic worship and devotion, all within the range of empirical dealings. The meditations contained in this book are conducive to the attainment of either one or more of the following results: 1) higher levels of consciousness, 2) gradual liberation through stages and/ or immediate liberation, 3) great efficacy of actions, 4) heavenly worlds and 5) worldly affluence and prosperity. These differences in the results are due to the differences in the quality and nature of meditation. The subject of this book is, no doubt rather very difficult and abstruse.

The spiritual sadhaka, whether he be a great king or poor peasant, at the very outset, realises the utter futility of his daily routine activities, to get complete satisfaction from the pleasure or happiness which this world can give. There is in him a yearning for some greater happiness the existence of which he has come to know from his own experience.

In every action, be it small or great, which is followed by a reaction which may be called its fruit or result, he feels a lacuna, something which he lacks, something which he finds eluding his grasp always. His attention is now turned from the name and form of the objects with which he comes into contact daily, to that something which is hidden within and covered by the names and forms. The stories and anecdotes given in some of these vidyas such as Nachiketa-vidya, Bhuma-vidya, Uttama-Purusha-vidya, Satyakama-vidya, Upa-kosala-vidya, etc. are pointers to the necessity of cultivating perfection in ethics and morality, right thinking, sraddha, unflinching faith in the scriptures and Masters and complete surrender of the ego at the altar of the Almighty Lord. Humility will be the hallmark of such a sadhaka.

The sadhaka has now to discriminate the real 'T' in him and the ego 'I' which masquerades as the former. He starts practising concentration and meditation, with the wrong idea or expectation to perceive the real 'I', as he has been per- ceiving external objects. He sees visions, light, darkness, dream-like states, etc., one after another. This causes confusion. His present attempt is like the attempt of one to see his own eyes, an impossible task indeed for reasons obvious.

An earnest sadhaka without getting mentally depressed at this stage, gets the help of the Master and realises that the Self can never be perceived as an object by the sense organs and the mind and that he has to experience It as his own innermost Consciousness.

Deep reflection and contemplation coupled with the grace of the Atman, God and guru, takes him to the next step wherein he realises that what he has been experiencing all these days are different states of the mind and that what he is seeking for is not a state of the mind. He comes to know that restlessness which he was trying to restrain, is the very nature of the mind. Now all effort ceases. He realises, as it were, the immediacy of the pure Consciousness like a flash of lightning. He is immersed in Bliss, as it were, for a short time. He comes back to world-consciousness and finds himself with his body-mind

personality sitting and enjoying the taste of the bliss through the mind.

A desire arises now to go back to that state of quietude to experience the flash of Bliss again. At this stage, his guru comes to his help and explains to him that to experience the Bliss, he need not withdraw the mind, because the Consciousness-Bliss is eternal and natural. This instruction of the guru at this stage, enters deep in his conscious-ness, for the ignorance has been almost completely destroy- ed. He now experiences the same Bliss under all the vary- ing conditions such as waking, dream, sleep, samadhi, etc. He finds that he need not escape from one stage to another to experience this Bliss. The outward and inward flow of the Consciousness (for the mind has now become one with the Consciousness) is allowed to go along its natural course. He realises that the Self is attainable neither by withdrawal nor by externalisation and that he need not put forth effort for either. He experiences the eternal, timeless present, which includes and at the same time excludes the presence and ab- sence of all the so-called limiting adjuncts and their relations. Is this the result of upasana or jnana? Has this realisation been brought about by upasana or jnana? Has it been gra- dual or sudden, mediate or immediate? All such academical questions and their intellectual answers no more cause any disturbance in him. He is Peace, Bliss, santih.

Whether he is meditating or attending to the so-called secular duties, he is one with the Self. Before this realisation he was making a difference between spiritual practices and secular activities, treating the latter as non-spiritual. Even in the former, the spiritual practices he was not having complete peace, for when worldly thoughts, thoughts other than that of God, appeared, he was disturbed. He used to become restless. He used to curse himself for his failure in meditation. He was thinking that during the period of say half an hour or sometimes more, his mind should be on God and God alone, in the form of his tutelary deity, a personal God. But now he realises that

God being omnipresent, present everywhere like the thread in the cloth, the gold in the bangle, is present in all thoughts also when they appear during his meditation. He now sees those thoughts as non- different from the thought of God, nay non- different from God, the Self. He realises that every thought is a manifestation of God. When a thought other than that of God, arises in his mind during his meditation, be it the so-called good thought or evil thought, he recognises it as the manifestation of God. He says to himself: "O God, I now know that it is You who are appearing as these thoughts. You can no more deceive me. You can appear in any form, any name, any thought, any action, any object or being. I will see You only in the all." When the mind sinks and a blank or void appears, then also he recognises the Self in that blank or void. He is not disturbed at all by any- thing. Meditation now becomes easy, effortless, strain-less, natural. He feels that he is in meditation not only during the fixed hours when he is meditating in his meditation room, but also at all other times during the whole day and night.

12. Conclusion: To summarise, the goal of all meditation is the attainment of supreme Knowledge by which one is freed from the pains and miseries of worldly life. This Knowledge is not dependent on anything external or internal. It is eternal, is beyond definition and description and manifests itself when the objective knowledge is transcended. And this happens when there is full awakening which brings about that Supreme state of Peace transcendental. exactly is the nature of division between knowledge and the object of knowing, in the case of objective knowledge? The reply is that there is really no division. But how is it that we are feeling the existence of such a division? It is due to the deluded belief that there is something other than Know- ledge or Consciousness outside Itself. In fact, there is no- thing either inside or outside. This so-called cosmos has not, in fact, come into being distinct from Consciousness. If any one experiences a world separate from Consciousness, let him know that it is unreal,

even as the dream world, mirage water, a second moon and castles in the air are unreal, although they are perceived. After cosmic dissolution and before creation, there can only be the Supreme Peace known through such names as Brahman, the Atman, the Absolute, the Infinite, the Plenum and so on, and in It there cannot exist a cause for creation for reasons obvious. And in the absence of a cause for creation, there cannot be an effect called the world. Thus is established that there is no real 'creation' in the ordinary sense of the term.

But all see the world. The Knowers of the Truth are in the world. Why not we consider the eternal Brahman as the cause of this world? Some scriptures also say so. The reply is that whatever there is in the cause that alone is found in the effect. A cloth is not found in a pot, because cloth is not the cause of the pot. Clay alone is found in the pot, because clay is the cause of the pot. Going a little deeper into this cause-effect relationship, we find that there is nothing other than the cause which is the clay, in the effect which is the pot. The pot does not really exist other to and different from clay in all the three periods of time- in the past before the appearance of the name and form of the pot. in the present when the name and form of the pot appear to exist, and in the future when the pot is broken and they are no more. So where is the question of a cause called clay and an effect called pot! Even so, before the so-called creation of the universe, there could have been only the Supreme, non-dual Brahman. How can an entity called 'cause' exist then distinct from Brahman? Not even a super-intellect can posit a cause in that non-dual Brahman before creation, since the very concept of 'cause' is a part of the universe which has not been created then. Hence Brahman cannot be said to be the cause of the universe really. If anyone asks, "why not assume that this universe exists in an unmanifested state in Brahman before creation and becomes manifested at the time of creation?", we have to put the counter question: "who has experienced the truth of this assumption of his

and why he reposes faith in such speculations?" If he still persists and says that this real and material world experienced by everyone cannot obviously spring up from void, then he must be told: "yes, the world is nothing but He, the pure Consciousness". Attempt has been made to bring out this Supreme Knowledge while dealing with many of the vidyas.

If pure Consciousness alone is, then how has the illusion of the world arisen? It has not arisen for want of a cause as already stated. The truth is that the Self itself thinks, as it were, of Itself as the subject and expresses Itself, as it were, as the objects of perception. Therefore, all this is but Consciousness and naught else. The immature aspirant may again raise the doubt as to how the Supreme Lord, Brahman, the Pure Consciousness can become the inert and unreal objects of the world. He must be again told that the Lord who is pure Consciousness has not be- come this world, as the latter does not really exist separate from the former.

How does the ego of the aspirant arise and experience this world? The ego has not arisen and hence there is no one to experience a world which is not there other to consciousness. Neither is there any illusion. The 'T', 'you' and all the rest is one infinite Consciousness. In the absence of a cause for this world, one should stop enquiring about it. All confusion about cause and effect also will cease. There is no confusion really, since Consciousness alone exists. 'Contemplation' and 'non-contemplation', the 'teacher' and the 'pupil' are Consciousness alone existing in Conscious- ness. In the absence of 'diversity' there is no 'oneness' either. In the absence of 'duality' there is no 'non-duality' also. There is no object or concept independent of Consciousness. Even ignorance, bondage and awakening or enlightenment have no existence apart from pure Consciousness. Knowing and realising this is 'awakening'. Just as a nightmare causes sorrow while it lasts and both cease when one wakes up, even so, the perception of world-illusion causes illusory sorrow and both vanish

when one is 'awakened' by this Supreme Knowledge. In the vision of such an awakened person, the unreal world-appearance has the character of a notion of a painting on the wall which has been almost washed away by rain. That hazy notion also fades away soon and he becomes totally free from all conditioning, limitation and fragmentation of Consciousness. He, the 'Whole', the Infinite experiences, as it were, the 'Whole' as the 'Whole', the 'Infinite' as the 'Infinite'.

The conditioning and limitation have gained deep root in man, because of having been revived in so many past lives. But they can be rooted out by the realisation of the truth that all objects exist in the infinite Consciousness as perverted notions. Thus through the practice of the vidyas, the rotation of the wheel of the repetitive birth and death can be stopped. It is pure Consciousness that shines as memory of the past experiences, as present experiences and as future hopes and fears. The mind is non-different from Consciousness. There is naught else. Hence there is no creation really as one thinks in the state of ignorance. The The world is really one's Self, the pure Consciousness. cause for this world attributed to Brahman, is as unreal as the cause attributed to the crow for the fall of the coco- nut in the popular maxim known as kaka-taliya-nyaya, the maxim of crow and coconut. A ripe coconut fell when a crow perched on a palm tree and the cause of the fall of the nut was attributed to the perching of the crow. This cause is unreal, as the nut would have fallen at that very moment even if the crow had not sat on the tree, because it was so ripe that it got itself separated from its stalk at that very moment. The Truth is that Consciousness shines as the three-the subject, object and the experiencing.

The practice of meditation on the lines indicated in the Upanishads by an earnest, qualified seeker, after initiation by his spiritual Master, will result in the attainment of Supreme Knowledge. His final realisation is that this universe of space, time and causation is even now Perfection

itself, the Absolute Itself. It has been so for ever and will be so for ever. In devotional language we say God has created this world. God being Perfection, His creation also cannot but be Perfection.

We conclude this introduction with the nature of that Supreme state which the meditator attains, as it were, in the end, as given expression to by Sage Vasishtha: "prabuddha- syaiva ya pumsah silajatharavat-sthitih, santau vyavahritau va'pi sa'mala mukttatochyate-That state in which the en- lightened one exists as if he lives in the very bowels of a rock, whether he is alone and at rest or engaged in diverse activities that is the state of purity and that is Liberation" [Yoga Vasishtha VI (2)-195-iv]. We live in that though we are constantly engaged in diverse activities says the Sage.

The ego 'T' and the Supreme Consciousness cannot co- exist as two real entities. The former is completely wound up, burnt to ashes, not even ashes, to nothing, as it were, by the latter. To put it in slightly different words the dross of the ego, the cause of samsara is burnt by the fire of wisdom into pure gold of Awareness. Along with it goes its effect, the whole universe which is known as samsara, the repetitive birth and death, change and decay, by revealing its real nature of pure Awareness. One moment of this supreme Awareness breaks the chain of samsara once for all. This is poetically put in a famous verse which says:

snatam tena samastha-tirtha-nichaya dattam mahi-mandalam,

viprcbhyah pitr-devatas-suraganas-sarvepi santarpitah;

japte mantra-sahasra-kotir-amuna taptam cha tivram tapo,

yasya brahma-vicharane kshanam-api prapnoti sthairyam manah.

Scriptures prescribe for the purification of the mind. and the final emancipation, a number of pious and meritorious acts such as baths in holy rivers, performance of charities and sacrifices, worship of God and so on. This verse says that that rare soul whose mind gets firmly

fixed in that pure Awareness even for a kshana (equal to 4/5 of a second), through deep reflection and meditation on Brah- man, attains the result which is greater than that one gets through holy baths in all the sacred waters, through offer- ing in charity the wealth of the whole world to pious and worthy souls, through propitiation of all the manes, gods and the hosts of celestials by offering libation of water, performing sacrifices and other rituals, through chanting of the holy mantras billions of times and through hard penance practised for long period, all put together.

"Om tat sat"

SECTION I

ISAVASYA-UPANISHAD

1. ISA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE LORD)

Isa-Vidya, meditation on the Lord is contained in the Isavasya-Upanishad mantras 1 and 4 to 8. This meditation when practised helps the seeker to realise the Supreme Truth. It is couched in aphoristic language. The first mantra which has condensed the essence of all the scriptural teachings, says: Isavasyam-idam sarvam yat-kincha jagatyam jagat, tena tyaktena bhunjithah ma-gridhah- kasyasvid-dhanam. Literally translated, it would mean "All this, whatsoever moves in this world should be covered by the Lord; protect yourself, or enjoy through that re- nunciation; do not covet or cherish any desire for any wealth; for whose is wealth?" It contains the relationship among God, world and soul, that between the individual and the world, and the duty of the former towards the world and God. Mahatma Gandhi is said to have remarked that even if all the sacred texts are lost to the world, this one single verse could be a substitute for all of them, point- ing out thereby, the great importance of this first verse of the first Upanishad in the traditional list of the 108 important Upanishads. This vidya instructs that one should meditate on this whole universe,
whatever is here moving or non-moving, sentient or insentient, as the Atman, the Self. 'As the in- dwelling Self of all, I am all this',-this thought should be entertained continuously. In the state of ignorance, the Self is covered, as it were, by the world of names and forms and that is why one does not perceive the Self. Everyone sees the umpteen objects of the world in the waking and dream states and also their absence in the deep- sleep state. None perceives the Atman who is the inner- most Reality in those objects, in all names and forms and in their absence and who pervades the whole universe with- out leaving an atom of space devoid of It. The Brihadaran- yaka Upanishad says: "All see His sport alone but none sees Him" (IV-iii-14). Commenting on this Mantra, the great Sankaracharya says that it is really pitiable that

although the Self is totally distinct from the body and organs and is present before their very eyes, people are yet unfortunate enough not to 'perceive' It. We may say that God pervades the world even as gold pervades the ornaments which go by different names as necklace, ring, bangle and so on. Gold pervades the ornaments through and through, so much so, that there is only gold in the ornaments, and the names such as necklace, ring, etc., are mere sounds without any substantiality or reality apart and distinct from gold. Just as children know these ornaments only as ornaments with their different nomenclature, people in ignorance who are like children in spiritual knowledge, know this world only as a collection of objects with distinguishing names and forms. But the goldsmith sees only the gold. He calculates the worth of the ornaments not with reference to their names and forms but from the total weight of gold they contain. Hundred grams of gold given the shape and name of, say a necklace, will weigh only a hundred grams, the weight of the original gold. The weight is that of gold and not of necklace, although we say that the necklace weighs a hundred grams. If something real and substantial as 'a necklace of hundred grams' had been produced by the goldsmith over and above the gold given to him, then the necklace should weigh two hundred grams, i.e., hundred grams of gold plus hundred grams of necklace. This is contrary to our own experience. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that the necklace is a mere unreal, unsubstantial name and form superimposed on the real gold. The Self is to the world as gold is to ornaments. The wise Sages see the Self alone as real in this appearance of the world of unreal names and forms.

The figurative expression 'covering the world with God' means that one should know that the whole world is nothing but the expression of God. When we know that the necklace is gold, we may say that we have covered the necklace with gold. This covering is done through knowledge. Before knowing this, God was as though covered by the

world, even as the gold was covered, as it were, by the name and form of the necklace.

There is really nothing other than the Self. The creation of this world will be a great mystery as long as we do not know this great Truth. The created world and the act of creation are non-different from the Creator, the Atman- Brahman. After waking up from a dream, everyone realises the true nature of the dream world-its identity with one's consciousness and the unreality of the externality and separateness of the objects seen. The seer, the seeing and the objects seen in the dream are nothing but the pure Consciousness. This fact is realised only after waking up from the dream and not while experiencing the dream when all the three appear to be separate and also real. By meditation as prescribed here, one wakes up from the waking-dream.

The second line of the verse says, 'protect yourself through that renunciation'. When the whole world is covered by God in the manner explained above, there will be no more the 'world'. This is referred to as tyaga, renunciation of the world. This is the real renunciation required of us by the scriptures, and not giving up of this and that, not throwing away a few objects, as wrongly understood by many neophytes in the spiritual path. This supreme renunciation, of covering the world with God, by knowing that all this world is nothing but Him alone, is the best means to protect oneself from the onslaught of this transmigra- tory existence. The world which in the state of ignorance was full of pain and misery, jealousy and hatred, fear and horror, is now my own Self, the dearest and the most lovable. There is no more any distinction between 'I' and 'you', 'this' and 'that', 'good' and 'bad'. Hence, longing for objects which has been the cause of sense-pleasure and pain, ceases. Wealth is no more a tantalising object. It is now non-different from oneself, and therefore, there is no coveting it. It is God, my own Self. In other words, there is no wealth of my own or of anybody else to desire for. It is all God's, nay, God

Himself, or 'I' myself. The three-fold desire-desire for progeny, wealth and higher worlds after death-ceases once for all. This is Lord Siva's renunciation depicted in the scriptures. It is that condition or state wherein the urge to want things other than the Self such as property and pelf, wife and wealth, name and fame, is completely absent.

Verses 4, 5 and 8 give some further help to meditation. This isa or isvara who is my own Self, the Self of all, is both saguna and nirguna simultaneously, with and without attributes at the same time. In God, these two do not contradict each other. It is not that he is some- times with attributes and at other times free from attributes. Attributelessness is also an attribute to God. His attributes are infinite, and therefore, He can be said to be attributeless also. His attributes are not like the attributes of limited objects such as the red colour of a flower, the sweet taste of sugar, and so on. All attributes are His because all this is He alone, And He includes all this and transcends all this. In His transcendental aspect, no attri- bute can be posited for Him, not even attributelessness. Thus the mind should meditate, and in so doing, the mind will cease to be mind, for it will be freed of all its modifications. When the mind is calm and still without vrittis, It is nothing but the Atman itself.

God should be meditated on as unmoving and at the same time moving faster than the mind. No object of this world can possess such opposite properties at the same time. But it is possible in God in whom all difference and opposition are reconciled.

To explain that in the conditioned aspect He moves and in the unconditioned aspect He does not move, is like saying that the car moves when the engine is working and does not move when the engine stops, or this body of mine moves when walking and does not move when sitting. If we literally accept this interpretation which seems to be reasonable, and therefore, acceptable, we would be equating that Infinite Being with a limited object. The mind should try to transcend its limited nature by assuming both move- ment and non-

movement at the same time. Time itself will cease to exist. It is seeing inaction in action and action in inaction, as the Bhagavadgita puts it. When the mind succeeds in this attempt it realises the truth about the Atman, by itself becoming the Atman.

Does the mind become the Atman? No. It was even before the Atman itself, but somehow thought it was limited and deluded. And now, through this meditation, that erroneous notion is removed. It is illustrated through the story of a hunter-prince. A prince was somehow lost in the forest while still a baby. This baby was found by a hunter who took it to his home. There he grew to adolescence and all these years he thought himself to be a hunter and lived as a hunter. One of the messengers of the king who were searching for the lost prince happened to meet him after many years. He recognised him as the prince, told him that he was not a hunter but the prince, the heir-apparent to the king. He believed those words, went to the capital and was crowned as king. Even so, this jiva somehow lost in the forest of this trans- migratory life, thinks himself to be a poor, impotent, human being with all his limitations. He is told by the Guru and the scriptures that he is not a poor jiva as he was thinking all along but the Atman, the Lord Himself. When he realises this truth, he is said to become the Atman. Just as the hunter-prince was a prince even while he was living in the forest with the hunter-parents undergoing poverty and misery, so is the man, while considering himself as bound, really the Atman who is ever free, being the Infinite which is incapable of being limited and bound. When that hunter- prince was told about his royal descent and when he came to know that he was a prince, we say he became the prince, although he was a prince all the time. The jiva is said to become the Atman only in a secondary or figurative sense, because really the jiva is always the Atman.

The Atman is to be meditated as very near because He is the innermost Self, and at the same time as far off, for He is all-pervasive like the ether and extends as far as there is space and even beyond it.

For the same reason, He is said to be inside all and at the same time outside all. He is pure, as He cannot be tainted by the objects of the world, even as the space which holds within it all the worlds is not tainted or affected in any manner, either favourably or unfavourably by the presence of these worlds. He is free from the three bodies, the gross, subtle and causal, because He does not possess them as objects outside Him. He Him- self is all these bodies. He is immanent in the world and yet transcends it. Whatever there is, something or nothing, He alone is that. As He is perfection, everything here is also perfection. To describe Him or to define Him is to defile Him, disgrace Him and deny Him. He is beyond all words and thought. As He is perfection itself, all that has come out of that Perfect Being cannot but be perfect. All is His own manifestation, nay, He Himself. Therefore, the whole universe cannot but be perfect. Thus should one meditate. The pains and miseries, the killings and torture, the so-called bad and repulsive, the small and the insignificant, all that is He himself who is Perfection itself. Even at the time of creation, if at all there is a creation, He has ordained everything to the minutest detail-- what is to happen, how it should happen, when and where, and how long this universe should continue and when and how it should dissolve at the time of dissolution, again if there is such a thing called dissolution of the world. When God is Infinite and all perfection, the world also is infinite and perfect. There cannot be two infinites as it is against all logic. Hence, the world and God are only two names of that nameless, infinite Being.

What is the result of this meditation? It is given in verses 6 and 7. He who practises this meditation successful- ly will perceive the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. He will not shrink from anything in this world. In the infinite state when he perceives everything as the Atman, non-different from himself, the pure Consciousness, the Awareness free of subject and object, all delusion vanishes and he is in his own original nature. The difference that exists in the state of

ignorance as 'this is mine' and 'that is his and not mine' is no more. If we analyse deeply the reason for calling something as mine, including this body, we will not be able to find a satisfactory and logical one. So, our love and its opposite, hate or aversion for the objects of this world, are unfounded and unjustifiable. We in our ignorance dare to curse even God if something adverse happens to us, and we praise Him when something goes according to our wish. Once a village boy was run over by a lorry when he was play- ing with other boys near the road just outside the village. The news reached the village. The parents of all the boys in the village ran to the road. Each parent thought it might be his or her child. When the identity of the boy was known, the parents of that particular boy started cursing God for causing the death of the child, while the parents of others praised God for saving their children. We in our ignorance think that God is responsible for the results. It is true in one sense but He dispenses only the results of our actions. He is neither kind nor cruel. It is the wrong relation that we hold with God in our ignorance of His infinite nature, through our limited and impure mind, which is the cause of our experiencing pain and misery. And when through this meditation 'isavasyam-idam sarvam-all this is pervaded by God', one realises the truth of the non-difference that exists among the apparently different things, one is freed from all likes and dislikes, and therefore, transcends all pleasure and pain and remains as sat-chit-ananda. In this cosmic experience there is no triad of experiencer, the experienced and the experiencing that exists in all the experiences through the mind and senses. There is no duality of subject and object. The waves are in the ocean and the ocean is in the waves, both being water alone. They are non-different and non-separate. The sparks which come out of fire are also fire and not different from the blazing fire from which they have come out. Such examples are given by the scriptures to prove and establish the non-difference of the world and God, the Atman-Brahman. Scriptures are merely informative. They do not try to alter the existing state of affairs. They give us the right know-

ledge about the world, God and the Self, as they are, by re- moving our wrong knowledge about them which we are having as a result of the report of the senses and the mind.

Sri Acharya Sankara in his commentary on the Briha- daranyaka Upanishad says: "By citing the things of the world which are known to be gross or subtle as examples, the scriptures want to tell us about some other thing (God) which does not contradict them (the things of the world). They would not cite an example from life, if they wanted to convey an idea of something contradictory to the example. If they did, it would be of no purpose, for the example would be different from the thing to be explained" (II-1-xx). He has also pointed out on many an occasion that each of the means of knowledge, such as direct perception, inference, the Vedas, comparison, presumption and non-apprehension (pra- tyaksha, anumana, agama, upamana, arthapatti and anupa- labdhi respectively) does not contradict the others, as each one works in its own realm and tells us about things that cannot be known by the other means. The scriptures cannot speak about an unknown thing without taking recourse to conventional words with their accepted meanings.

So, one should follow the instructions of the scriptures which enunciate the truth of the non-difference here in these seemingly different objects, then prove it through many illustrations, analogies and examples, and conclude by asserting once again the ultimate truth of oneness. Whether the world appears as in dream and waking states, or disappears as in deep-sleep state, it is the Lord who shines in His pristine glory. This is directly realised, experienced without the medium of the mind, by the meditator who practises this vidya.

2. VIDYA-AVIDYA-UPASANA

(MEDITATION ON KNOWLEDGE CUM KARMA)

This meditation is given in verses 9 to 11 of the Isavasya Upanishad. They are:

andham tamah pravisanti ye avidyamupasate,

tato bhuya iva te tamo ya u vidyayam ratah

anyadevahur-vidyaya anyad-ahuravidyaya,

iti susruma dhiranam ye nastadvicha chakshire

vidyam cha avidyam cha yastad-vedobhayam saha,

avidyaya mrityum tirtva vidyaya amritam-asnute.

Literally translated these verses mean: Those who worship avidya (karma) enter into blinding darkness, but those who are engaged in vidya (knowledge), enter into greater darkness. The wise say that by the meditation on vidya and avidya separately, different results are achieved. He who meditates on these two together, attain immortality through vidya by crossing over death through avidya.

vidya here means knowledge and avidya means performance of rituals, karmas. The knowledge of God is vidya, and the knowledge of the world is avidya. vidya here, however, does not mean brahmavidya, the Supreme Knowledge. It means meditation and worship of gods. Those who perform karma alone, attain after death the world of the manes and those who do meditation on the gods, attain the world of those gods. This is the traditional knowledge we get regarding the two, vidya and avidya, treated as separate. Those who attain the world of the manes return to this world when the results of their karmas are exhausted. Those who attain the worlds of gods also have to return to this world after experiencing the fruits of their meditation. But, those who wisely combine the two, karma and meditation, transcend 'death' in the form of rites and meditation, caused by the subtle impressions

of merit and demerit and identify themselves with the deities. This identification with the deities is termed immortality which does not mean the final state of liberation.

Our conduct in the world in the present state of affairs as individual jivas is avidya in one sense. And our accept- ance of God's existence in the world is vidya. The accept- ance of this world including one's own body as real and substantial according to the reports of the senses, okayed by the mind and intellect, is avidya and holding on to this conviction leads one to blinding darkness of ignorance and the endless life of transmigration. vidya is the theoretical knowledge of superhuman beings and of a life after death. To be always absorbed in this knowledge alone to the detriment of normal life-activities in this world, is said to be worse than the other. Those who are engaged in it, are said to enter into greater darkness, due to their ego- ism and pride about their knowledge. They consider them- selves superior to the ordinary people and puffed up by their false satisfaction, they completely neglect their duty to this world and suffer degradation. Their fall is from a greater height, the false heights which they have presumed, and naturally, the fall takes them to greater depths, the abysmal worlds of suffering.

The world must be accepted for what it is and can- not be rejected completely. But at the same time, God must be known as the substratum of this world. We can not have a world without God and God without the world, in our present state, when we identify ourselves with our bodies or even have the idea that the body is ours. To be devoted to either the world alone forgetting God, or to God alone neglecting the world, would be acceptance of a part alone instead of the whole. To be completely ab- sorbed and immersed in this sense world, or to be fully absorbed in the study of scriptures and acquiring more scholarship and rejecting the world as something unwanted -both are not advisable. In the name of sudhana, one should not hate the world. It is worse than attachment to the world.

Therefore, one should take into consideration both God and world and do one's duties in the light of the knowledge that God is the substratum for this world phenomena.

In other words, the seeker should bring about harmony between God and world. They are not two distinct, separate, unconnected things each having nothing to do with the other or opposing each other. Many spiritual neophytes hate the world. The out and out materialists hate even the very name of God. Both are walking the wrong path. Both cannot get out of this painful trans- migratory existence. It is true that God cannot be seen as we see objects of this world. But that does not mean that He does not exist. Everyone has to accept the existence of things that are not perceivable to the senses. A little reflection would convince one that the invisible hands of God are everywhere, in all actions and all happenings in this world.

World is like fire which is both useful and harmful, depending on how we make use of it. Fire can be used for cooking food and warming in winter and, at the same time, it may be used to burn houses and villages. Even so is the world which, through the knowledge of God, be- comes a heaven to live in and a means of liberation, and which without it, becomes a hell and the cause of bondage. This meditation prescribes performance of karma with the knowledge of God as the substratum or the living spirit in this world.

The modern man habituated to the so-called democratic ways of living and who always wants things to be decided by majority votes may raise the question: All people alike see a real sense-world, but the scriptures tell that the world is unreal. Similarly, all people alike do not perceive God, but the scriptures say God exists and He is the only reality. How can we accept the scriptural statements in the light of the above experience of all people to the contrary? The reply is that Truth does not depend upon the votes of the ignorant majority. In the parliaments of the nations any law can be introduced by the ruling party with their majority votes, be the law just or unjust. But in the

spiritual world, this is not applicable. A funny story illustrates this point, how the majority votes of the modern man decide things quite contrary to the truth.

Once an aged man who was ill for a long period died. The doctor seeing that breathing had stopped certified that he was dead. He was taken to the graveyard. All the people of the locality including the village doctor joined the funeral procession. A retired judge also was among the crowd. They reached the burial ground. To their surprise the corpse showed signs of life coming back. In a few moments, everybody found that the man was alive and not dead. The doctor who certified that he was dead was puzzled. He was in a fix. His egoism would not allow him to admit his mistake. There were a few who supported the doctor. They said that the doctor who was highly qualified and had a roaring practice for the last so many years, could not go wrong. But the man showed signs of life in him. There was confusion and the whole party did not know how to proceed whether to bury him or take him back to his house. Now the retired judge who was silently watching the situation so far interfered and said: "I have, to my credit, thirty years of service in the judiciary, and if you all permit me I shall pronounce my judgment after hearing both sides and after taking into account all the facts of this case". All agreed to the proposal. He heard arguments for and against. Then he said; "we have been hearing both sides. Now I will take your votes. Those who are in favour of the doctor's decision, please raise your hands". The vast majority among the crowd raised their hands, because they did not want to incur the displeasure of the local doctor, for reasons obvious. The judgment was issued by the learned And he was buried alive. judge that the man was dead. This is how human democracy works in these days. This cannot apply in the case of God whose existence does not depend upon the votes of the ignorant. The only guidance here is the scripture and the spiritual master.

Man must discriminate and use his common-sense. He should not go to the extremes. He must take the middle path. samatvam yoga uchyate-says the Bhagavadgita. A wise combination of karma and upasana as prescribed in this vidya is conducive to spiritual progress. This combination of karma and upasana takes one to krama-mukti, gradual liberation. It can also lead to the Supreme, Absolute Knowledge that results in sadyomukti, immediate liberation.

3. SAMBHUTI-ASAMBHUTI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON HIRANYAGARBHA CUM ISVARA)

"Andham tama pravisanti ye asambhutim-upasate,

Tato bhuya iva te tamo ya u sambhutyam ratah. (12)

Anyadahuh sambhavat anyadahur-asambhavat,

Iti susruma dhiranam ye nastad-vichachakshire. (13)

Sambhutim cha vinasam cha yastad-vedobhayam saha,

Vinasena mrityum tirtva sambhutya amritam-asnute. (14)

"Those who meditate on the 'Unmanifested' enter into blinding darkness, but those who meditate on the 'Manifested' enter into greater darkness. We have heard from the wise men who have explained that to us, that results for the meditation on the 'Unmanifested' and the 'Manifested' are different. He who combines the meditation on these two, the 'Unmanifested' and the 'Destruction' (the Manifested), crosses over death through 'Destruction' and attains im- mortality through the 'Unmanifested'.

The above three verses of the Isavasya-upanishad in- struct on the meditation of asambhuti and sambhuti together. The meditation prescribed under vidya-avidya-upasana is with reference to the microcosm, while this one under the name of sambhuti-asambhuti-vidya is from the viewpoint of the macrocosm. asambhuti refers to avyakta, prakriti, isvara state of consciousness, and sambhuti refers to hiranya- garbha, also referred to as vinasa, destruction. The former is the unborn cause for the born hiranyagarbha who is the effect. In other words, the cause of hiranyagarbha is isvara or prakriti, the equilibrium state of the three gunas-sattva, rajas and tamas and the ultimate cause of the five subtle elements-sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

By a combined meditation on hiranyagarbha, the effect and isvara, the cause, as non-different, one gets gradual liberation. One should leave off one's wrong notion that the effect is different from the cause. Can anyone, by any stretch of imagination, find out any real difference between a pot and the clay out of which the pot is made? No, for clay remains unchanged even when it is given the shape and name of a pot. Even when the pot is changed into a jar or a plate, the clay remains unchanged. There is nothing in the pot except clay. When I touch the pot, I touch clay alone. Take away the clay and there is no pot. Pot is an idea in the mind alone. Thus, the effect is non-different from the cause, the former is a mere unreal name, while the latter is the only real entity. Applying this example, we must meditate on the non- difference of hiranyagarbha and isvara. hiranyagarbha is the first born purusha. He is in the subtle state of cosmic prana, which is the same as cosmic intelligence and the cosmic mind, before he manifests him- self as this gross universe. He is known by the name of brahma, the creator, in the puranas.

The result of meditation on isvara is merging in Him-- prakriti-laya in the language of Sage Patanjali's ashtunga- yoga. This is not the final liberation. The manifested world merges in prakriti, only to be projected again in due time. The world does not completely dissolve as in sadyo-mukti through Supreme Knowledge. The world remains in a seed form in prakriti-laya, even as a big banyan tree remains in an unmanifested state inside the small atomic seed. It is like the deep-sleep state that everyone experiences daily, when the whole gross world of the waking state as well as the subtle world of the dream state, remain in an unmani- fested form, only to come out again when one comes into the waking state or goes to the dream state. The meditator who enters into prakriti-laya, comes out again in his original condition when the creation starts. Because there is rebirth again in this world, it is said to be entering into blinding darkness, the darkness of ignorance.

In the meditation on sambhuti or hiranyagarbha though it is cosmic in character, it is still in the realm of the relative world, from the stand point of the Absolute.

Acharya Sankara in his commentary on these verses says that the result of meditation on the sambhuti, the 'manifested', comprises of the supernormal faculties such as, the powers to become atomic in size, to expand into vast magnitude, to become very light in weight, to assume enormous weight, to control others, to enter into another's body, to attain the desired objects, to take any form and rule over others. These powers are really obstacles to the attainment of the highest goal by the spiritual aspirant. All of them are within the realm of ignorance and should be shunned ruthlessly by the seeker after Liberation. The Upanishad, therefore, warns the meditator that he should not be caught up in these powers, by the meditation on the sambhuti alone which by itself is not the direct means to attain the Supreme. Only when sambhuti or hiranyagarbha is taken as one with asambhuti or isvara, its cause who pervades it like the thread in a cloth, and meditation done on the whole, it leads to krama-mukti. The world which is the connotation of the word sambhuti, should not be considered as distinct from God, isvara, the asambhuti.

An oft quoted verse says: "aisvaryasya samagrasya viryasya yasasah sriyah, jnana vairagyayoschaiva shannam bhagaitirana-bhagavan or isvara is said to be He who has the six attributes, i.e., infinite auspiciousness and wealth, power, fame, prosperity, knowledge and dispassion". Ano- ther verse declares: "utpattim pralayam chaiva bhutanam- agatim gatim, vetti vidyam-avidyam cha sa vachyo bhaga-van iti-He who knows creation and dissolution, the com- ing and going of beings, and vidya and avidya, is called bhagavan, isvara". In these verses as well as in many other places in the scriptures it may appear that isvara is depicted as though distinct and separate from oneself and the world. This meditation on hiranyagarbha cum isvara does away with this apparent distinction. Although all distinctions and

individuality vanish even in the state of hiranyagarbha, still from the point of view of the unconditioned Absolute, it is said to be tainted with the concept of universality and subtlety. This is removed by merging it in isvara and meditating on that Consciousness wherein the distinction bet-ween cause and effect, God and the world, subject and object, does not exist. Even a trace of distinction or separate-ness is an obstacle to the final Liberation. In the Kathopanishad the Lord of Death himself says to Nachiketas: "O Nachiketas, you are greater than even me, the Lord of Death who can swallow all the three worlds in an instant. I, even after knowing that everything here is perishable, practised meditation on the vaisvanara-agni, universal fire, and as a result, have attained my present position as Lord Yama, whereas, you have rejected even my position which is praiseworthy, being universal abounding in all divine faculties, the eight super-human powers, and have opted for that which is unconditioned and beyond all this relative phenomena" (I-2-x and xi).

In all such meditations, the meditator is instructed through various means to avoid the common mistake like- ly to be committed by him in meditation which is nothing but conceptualisation of the object of meditation, making it an 'object' in space and time, and thereby, treating it as different and external to the meditator. This error, which cannot be avoided in the early stages of meditation by the neophyte, has to be rectified as he proceeds higher and higher, if he wants to reach the ultimate goal. And that is done by following the instructions of one's guru who initiates the meditator into a particular vidya, and by the grace of God whom he wants to attain, and through the blessings of his own Self who is not different from God and Guru. Whatever one attains is through self-effort and not other- wise. God is the Self and Self is God. The distinction bet- ween Self and God is only verbal. It is the Self in the aspirant that generates in itself devotion to God. The aspirant obtains from God who is his own Self, the boon of Self-enquiry, and through such enquiry attains Self-know-

ledge. It may be said that one attains Self-knowledge through Self-enquiry undertaken through self-effort. It may also be said that self-effort manifests as devotion to God who is also the Self and thus one attains enlightenment.

SECTION II

KENA-UPANISHAD

4. NIRGUNA BRAHMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON ATTRIBUTELESS BRAHMAN)

The goal of all vidyas, meditations, is the one, non-dual, infinite Brahman alone. All Upanishads practically deal directly or indirectly with brahma-vidya alone. This particular Nirguna Brahma Vidya however confines itself with what the Kenopanishad says on this subject. A doubt may arise in the reader whether there are two Brahman-s, one saguna with attributes and the other nirguna without attributes. The answer depends upon the state of the questioner and answerer. The answer may be 'Yes' or 'No' or 'both' or 'neither'. Brahman, the Absolute, the Consciousness pure, includes all and excludes all, immanent in all and transcends all. Perhaps It is also free from all inclusion, exclusion, immanence and transcendence. The one and only aim of all meditations is to directly know and realise that the meditator is always non-different from Brahman, the 'object' of meditation and the act of meditating.

It is significant that the word vidya in Sanskrit can mean both knowledge and meditation. We may not be far from the right if we say that meditation which is said to end in Knowledge is the same as Knowledge. Meditation or meditating is really no action like talking, thinking, eat- ing, etc. It is the 'object' realising its forgotten subjectivity, thus doing away with the false division of 'subject' and 'object'.

Kenopanishad chapters I and II give this nirguna-brah- ma-vidya. The word nirguna as antonym of saguna means 'attributeless'. But, here we have to understand it in a different sense altogether. Brahman cannot be limited by saying that He is attributeless. Attributelessness is also an attribute in one sense. mantras I-5 to 9 say tad-eva brahma tvam viddhi-you know That alone to be Brahman. What is meant by the word "That'? The answer is given: (1) It is That which is not uttered by speech, but by which the speech itself is uttered. 2) It is That which

is not thought of by the mind, but by which the mind thinks. (3) It is That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but by which the eyes are able to see objects. (4) It is That which cannot be heard by the ears, but which enables the ears to hear sounds. (5) It is That which cannot be smelt by the nose, but by which the nose gets its power of smelling. Though the Upanishad refers to only four organs and the mind we have to add to these five, the remaining organs, viz., the four motor- organs of hands, legs, anus and the sex organ, the two sense-organs of taste and touch, and the three sub-divisions of the internal organ- the intellect, the ego and the subconscious. Thus, the word "That' in the mantras refers to Brahman which can be contacted neither by the five motor-organs, nor by the five sense-organs, nor by the four parts of the internal organ, antahkarana. One has thus to meditate on That which transcends all the organs.

Meditation is a function of the mind in the early stages. How can the mind meditate on that which is beyond itself? It seems to be an impossible feat. Even supposing that some one, by some means, succeeds in meditating on Brahman as indicated in the Upanishadic mantras, the Upanishad in the second half of the second line of the five verses referred to above, makes the repeated statement that Brah- man is not what people worship and meditate (upasate) here. If anyone says that he is practising meditation on Brahman, then let him be certain that what he meditates upon is not Brahman, the Infinite, the whole.

In mantra II-1 of this Upanishad, the teacher says to the disciple: If you think that you have known Brahman well, you have not known It fully, you have known only a part, a little expression of that Infinite Being, at the most, about the gods above and the self within. You have to deliberate and meditate further. Then the disciple, says Sri Sankara in his commentary, having heard this observa- tion made by the teacher, sat in solitude with his mind concentrated, reflected on the teaching of the master (as contained in chapter I) together with their import

hidden by the words, meditated on it and made it a matter of direct, personal Experience. Then he goes to the teacher and says: 'Now I think Brahman is known.' Explaining his state- ment further, the disciple says: 'I do not feel that I have known It properly, not that I do not know, I know also. He among us who knows and yet not knows, really knows' (II-1 and 2). These mantras are very enigmatic and are capable of giving different meanings. The disciple is try- ing to express through words what he has directly 'experienced, without the intervention of the mind which is present in all ordinary experiences. That which cannot be experienced through the mind, cannot be expressed through words. The disciple is trying to do an impossible task and, hence, the apparent contradiction that we see in his statements.

This seems to contradict the previous statement of the master, repeated five times, that Brahman is not what people worship and meditate, for it is said that the disciple after hearing from the teacher meditated on what he heard For, about Brahman. But really it does not contradict. although in meditation there is the functioning of the mind in the form of the triad of the meditator, the object of meditation and the act of meditation, the result attained viz., the Supreme Brahman is beyond all triads, and therefore, transcends the mind. All meditations start with the triad, but takes the meditator to that which is beyond the triads. A thorn is used to remove a thorn in the leg and both the thorns are thrown away leaving the leg in its original healthy condition. The soap-nut powder put in muddy water, makes all the mud sink down and along with the mud it also sinks down, leaving the water in its original pure state. Similarly, here, concentration and meditation by the mind on the attributeless nature of Brahman, takes the meditator to the supreme state of Brahman, the unconditioned, unlimited Consciousness which is beyond the mind. beyond all attributes and their negation. Even at the time of thinking of an object, the mind is really one with the object. In

meditation also the result is attainment of one-ness with the object of meditation which is Brahman. So the Upanishadic declaration that Brahman is not what people worship here, not only eliminates all limited forms of the deities that are worshipped, but also all objects thought of by the mind. In short, all anatman, all that is not-atman, all names and forms perceptible to the senses and the mind and their negation are not to be mistaken for the Supreme Brahman.

The Atman as though within the meditator, appearing as if atomic in size, seated inside the small space in the heart-lotus, is really Brahman that pervades the whole space outside and extends further by ten inches, as the purusha- sukta puts it. The secret behind our never-ending desires is that it is this Infinite Brahman that is behind these desires. Hence it is that the desires are also infinite. It is beautifully and picturesquely given in the puranas in the story of the ramana-avatara. A small dwarfish boy asked king Bali for land measuring three paces by his little feet. The king who granted his request, could not fulfil it, for the small boy, Vamana, was really the infinite Brahman in disguise who measured all the universes by two paces and demanded the remaining one pace. Then Bali showed his head and the Lord placed His third step on that head. Our desiring also is really the desire for the Whole-the gross, the subtle and the causal realms and that which is beyond them-and hence it is that no one is completely satisfied even with all the objects that this mortal world can give.

Now, the first chapter of the Upanishad gives the in- comprehensible nature of Brahman or its attributelessness, to help meditation. The language naturally is very pithy and aphoristic. Brahman is to be meditated as the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of the speech, the prana of the prana, the Eye of the eye, and so on. As Brahman is thus beyond the organs, neither these organs nor even their presiding deities can know Brahman. No- body has known Brahman as an object, and hence, it is difficult of being taught or communicated to another through words. Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahamsa says that God alone is unpolluted by the mouth, because no one has so far expressed Him through words by the organ of speech. The word 'God' itself when expressed through the mouth, cannot connote that Infinite Brahman whom even the mind cannot think of. All objects of the world including all concepts expressed in words by the organ of speech may be said to be polluted, because they have contacted the saliva and the germs in the mouth. Brahman is different from all that is known, from an atom up to hiranyagarbha, the Creator, and It is above the unknown and unknowable isvara. This is the knowledge which has come down from the ancient past to the modern times through a chain of teachers and disciples. Thus should one meditate on Brahman.

In the second chapter of the Upanishad is given some more help to meditation. The language, here again, is very abstruse and likely to cause confusion, nay even a feeling of frustration in the seekers, especially, the neophytes. Brah- man, says the Upanishad, should be meditated as That which is known to those to whom It is unknown, and That which is unknown to those who know. Those who after reading a few scriptures think they know Brahman, to them Brah- man remains unknown. The Seers who have realised the truth that Brahman cannot be known like an object or a concept by the senses and the mind, to them Brahman is said to be known, as they have directly realised It through intuition which transcends all intellectual knowledge. Such knowers of Brahman perceive It in every cognition, in every modification of the mind, as the Self-awareness in all sensations, as well as in their absence. They have gone beyond all concepts of the mind which have revealed their real rature, viz., the Atman-Brahman. Because in all concepts it is the light of the Atman that reveals the mind which has assumed the form of the particular concept.

This meditation results in Immortality in addition to strength, physical, mental and spiritual.

A Sufi saint says: Man passes through three stages: First he worships anything-man, woman, money, children, earth and stones. Then, when he has progressed a little further, he worships God. Finally, he does not say, 'I worship God', nor does he say 'I do not worship God'. He has now passed from the first two stages into the last. First, there is knowledge, then there is asceticism, then there is Knowledge that comes after asceticism. The 'Ultimate 'Knower' is worth a hundred thousand ascetics.

5. SAGUNA BRAHMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON BRAHMAN WITH ATTRIBUTES)

To those who find it difficult to practise the just previous meditation on the attributeless Brahman, is given an easier meditation on Brahman with attributes. Brahman is that which does everything, as that which does anything, anywhere at anytime. Brahman is to be meditated not only as Supreme Existence, but also as Supreme Activity and the Agent behind all activity. 'Being' and 'doing' are non-different- thus should one meditate. This vidya also occurs in Kenopanishad, chapter III and IV-1 to 3. The instruction is given through a story.

In one of the battles between the celestials and the de- mons, the former won a victory over the latter. Such battles are going on in all levels of consciousness between the positive and negative forces, virtue and vice, at all times. Sometimes, the positive forces win and at other times the negative forces have the victory. In this particular instance, when the celestials were victorious, they became proud and egoistic and thought that the victory was due to their strength, forgetting the Unseen Power behind all actions described as the prana of prana in the first chapter of this Upanishad. It is given the name daivam, the Divine Power, the fifth factor in all actions, the other four being the body. the experiencer, the various organs and the activities, (the Bhagavad-gita, XVIII-14). It is also termed the devatmasakti in the Svetasvatara Upanishad I-3. In order to remove this false vanity which is a stumbling block in the spiritual path, the Supreme Brahman which is omniscience, all-sentience, pure Consciousness, appeared before them in the form of a mysterious spiritual Being, yaksha, a super-human. perhaps super-divine also, because the celestials themselves were unable to know Him. If He were one among the celestial, divine beings, they would have certainly known Him. Such an incredible, mighty, gigantic form the celestials had Lever seen before. They were taken aback by the appearance of this most wonderful Being. agni, the god of fire was deput- ed to find out who or what exactly was that

Being. How can the object know the subject? How can a part, the finite, know the Whole, the Infinite? It is impossible. Before the fire- god could start his enquiry, he was, on the other hand, himself subjected to an enquiry by that mysterious Being. On being asked by that Being as to who he was and what power he had, the fire-god in all vanity, replied that he was the well known fire-god, the foremost among the celestials and capable of burning the whole world in a trice, thus himself giving an occasion for his power being tested. That Being, the yaksha, placed a piece of dry straw in front of agni and asked him to burn it. He could not burn it for the yaksha, the Supreme Power behind all actions, had withdrawn that power of burning from him. agni could not even touch it or shake it, a little piece of dry straw! He could not burn it. With his head bent down out of shame and frustration, agni returned to the gods. Then it was the turn of vayu, the wind-god, to go and enquire and know the real nature of the yaksha. He also met with the same fate as agni. Now indra, the king of the celestials, the emperor of the three worlds himself went, thinking that what the other gods could not do, himself their king, could certainly achieve. Indra is certainly more powerful than the other gods under him. The The ego or the mind in us has got more power than power than the sense-organs. While the sense-organs cannot function without the the mind, the mind can do all sorts of things by mere imagination, in the absence of the sense-organs. The story says that before that mighty yaksha, the most powerful indra also met with miserable defeat. As soon as indra went, the yaksha dis- appeared from his view. He could not have the privilege of even talking to the yaksha which his subordinate gods enjoyed. How could he show his face to the gods now? His ego had a heavy blow that almost stunned him. When one's ego is quelled, that is the proper time for the appear ance of the spiritual guru. indra now saw the great god- dess uma, haimavati, standing before him with a smiling face, ready to instruct him on the nature of the yaksha, i.e., the Knowledge of Brahman. The goddess told indra that the great mysterious yaksha was none other

than Brahman who was the cause for the success of the celestials over the demons.

This same truth about the Supreme Power that is be- hind the success of the celestials in their war against the demons, is illustrated in the great epic mahabharata thro- ugh many incidents. One such incident was that which took place just after the close of the war, when the spirit of Ghatotkacha, the son of Bhima by the demoness Idumbi, was summoned and questioned as to the part played by the various warriors in that great war. 'Whom do you think as the greatest warrior ?'-was the question put to him. His reply reveals the great truth of the existence of the Supreme Being behind every action. He said: "I do not know who fought and how they fought and other similar details. I only saw one Being, the Being of Krishna moving and there was nothing else visible to the eyes."

Another incident was a conversation that took place, between Sri Vyasa and Arjuna, that too after the war. Arjuna was seeing a mysterious and gigantic form in the battle- field moving here and there, sometimes visible and some- times invisible, during all the eighteen days of the war. After the war, Arjuna asked about the identity of that Being and Vyasa told him that it was Lord Siva who was helping him and his brothers in the war. "He was not only helping all of you", said Vyasa, "He was the only one behind you and giving strength to you to fight against the mighty personages like Bhishma, Drona, Karna and others."

A third incident was that which happened when, after the war, Lord Krishna congratulated Yudhishthira for his success in the war. Yudhishthira then said these significant words: "O Krishna, It is you who are responsible for the success and not me or anybody else."

Still another occasion when this truth about the immanent aspect of that Transcendental Being is revealed, is when Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna how He Himself, everyday of the battle when Karna was

fighting against him, hypnotised him (Karna) due to which he forgot to use his unfailing weapon, the sakti which was given to him by indra, and how it was He Himself who made Karna to use it against Ghatotkacha.

Behind every incident in this world, whether big or small, greatly significant or insignificant, He alone is, and it is His power that does everything. He alone is the cause of the victory of the winner as well as the defeat of the vanquished. He works miracles and every incident in our life, if only we go deep into its cause, will be seen to be a miracle.

He is everywhere and still He cannot be seen as we see an object or person. Thus should one meditate on Him, the saguna-brahman, as the ultimate cause of all that happens here in this world and the other worlds. He should not be limited as the cause alone. He is also the effect as well as that which connects the cause with the effect. The result of this meditation is gradual liberation, krama-mukti.

6. ADESA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON BRAHMAN WITH THE HELP OF ANALOGY)

This vidya is given in mantras 4 and 5 of chapter IV of the Kenopanishad

"tasyaisha adeso yadetad-vidyuto vyadyutada itin-nya- mimishada iti adhidaivatam (4); athadhyatmam yadetat gacchativa cha mano anena cha etadupasmaratyabhikshnam samkalpah (5)-Of the Brahman under discussion, this is the instruction about meditation through analogy. It is like the flash of lightning and It is also as though the eye winked. These are illustrations in the divine context (4). After this is the instruction for meditation through analogy in the context of the individual self. This is a well-known fact that the mind seems to go to Brahman, that Brahman is repeatedly remembered by the mind, and that the mind has thoughts about Brahman (5)."

Brahman is to be meditated as the illuminator of the flashes of lightning which illumine large areas of the sur- face on the earth. Brahman's illumination is immediate like that of lightning as contrasted with the gradual illumination of the earth by the rising sun. This is an analogy to help meditation. Light of Brahman is not like the physical light of lightning. It is spiritual intuition. While physical light is sensory and grasped by the mind and the intellect, spiritual light is realised through intuition which is neither sensory nor mental. In intuition, there is a total manifestation of the entire Being of the subject and the object, as distinguished from a partial manifestation or expression as in the case of the sensory and intellectual knowledge. In intuition, there is completeness of knowledge of the subject and object, both externally and internally, while in sensory knowledge we get only the knowledge of the outer name and form. The analogy of lightning should not be stretched too far lest it should lose its purpose. In the case of the flash of lightning, the illumination lasts for a few moments only, but in the case of spiritual illumination, once it comes

it never goes out allowing the darkness of ignorance to come back. It remains permanently, transcending time and space. The immediate-ness of lightning is within time, while in Brahman, the word 'immediate' is non-temporal, beyond time.

The dawn of brahma-jnana, the knowledge of Brahman, is simultaneous with the destruction of ignorance, even as in the well-known analogy of the rope and snake, there is no time interval between the rise of the knowledge of the rope and the destruction of the illusory snake. (For details of this illustration of rope and snake see purna-vidya). Does the destruction of the nescience, which has existence from the time of beginningless creation, take equally long time? Even as the age-long darkness in a cave is destroyed completely and immediately by switching on a torch-light or striking a match stick, the beginningless darkness of ne- science will be destroyed simultaneously with the dawn of knowledge, brahma-vidya, merely by the latter's rise through discrimination, dispassion and self-enquiry.

Another illustration given in the mantra to help meditation is the winking of the eye. All wink their eyes effortlessly and unconsciously or without conscious effort. Nobody takes serious note of the winking of the eyes. Breath- ing also goes on without effort. These are due to the power of Brahman. Thus should one meditate on Brahman. He is not only behind the striking phenomena such as the flashes of lightning and similar things, but also behind the most subliminal acts like winking of the eyes, breathing and the like. The same idea, brought out in another Upanishadic statement, says: "He is subtler than the subtlest, smaller than the smallest, and at the same time, bigger than the biggest and greater than the greatest". Behind the greatest and smallest He is hidden as the impelling energy, the Light of Consciousness. In short, the Upanishad wants the meditator to perceive the presence of the Supreme Consciousness behind every object and every experience.

The next mantra gives the instruction for meditation with the help of His expression in the body of the meditator as the Self. The mind cognises the objects because of Him. Remembrance and imagination by the mind is due to His power expressed as consciousness. We say that it is the mind that perceives the objects through the five senses and performs all actions through the five motor-organs. It is the mind that has created this universe. But the mind by itself is an inert object like other objects. It is through Brahman's light of consciousness that the mind is able to create this world, sustain it and dissolve it in the end. Gurudev, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, has given a comprehensive definition of mind. He says that mind is a mysterious something which is really nothing but which does every- thing. It is very difficult to be known. No one has seen the mind. You cannot say whether it really exists or not. Thus it is mysterious, as mysterious as avidya and maya, for mind is synonymous with them. When one realises Brahman behind the mind, it is no more, and hence, it is said to be really nothing. But, the whole creation is the projection of the mind. The three states of waking, dream- ing and deep-sleep are projections of this mysterious mind. Creation, existence and dissolution of the universe are projections of this mysterious mind. Bondage and liberation are also its projections. In short, there is nothing in all the three worlds which is not its creation. Hence, it is said that It does everything. Brahman is the driving force in the form of consciousness behind this mind. Thus should one meditate.

In the same Upanishad in chapter III, a meditation on Brahman is given wherein it is said that He appeared to the celestials as a mysterious Being, yaksha, and also disappeared (see saguna-brahma-vidya).
According to one interpretation of the two present mantras, Brahman is to be meditated upon as That which reveals suddenly like lightning and winking, which flashes like lightning, appears and disappears as the eye winks.

These meditations help the meditator to arrive at the ultimate knowledge of Brahman which is the non-mediate experience of the identity of the meditator with the whole of creation, which helps him to realise "I am Brahman".

7. TADVANAM-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON TADVANAM)

tad-ha tadvanam nama tadvanam ityupasitavyam, sa ya etadevam veda abhihainam sarvani bhutani sam-vanchanti (Kenopanishad IV-6). This is the mantra of the Kenopa- nishad which gives this vidya. Literally translated, the mantra means: That (Brahman) is well known as tad- vanam; hence, It is to be meditated upon as tadvanam, all creatures verily pray to him who meditates and realises as such.

Here, the name of the Absolute is given as tadvanam, with the help of which one should practise meditation on Brahman. There are many mystical words in the Upani- shads and also in the other scriptures such as, the tantra- sastra, mantra-sastra and the like, which have no definite dictionary meanings like other words. In one sense tad-vanam may be said to be one such word to help the seekers in meditation. Sri Acharya Sankara however, has tried to bring out the meaning 'adorable being' for tadvanam which, according to him, has been derived from the word tasya (his) and vanam (adorable). The Lord, the Absolute is most adorable, lovable and worshipful, being extremely beautiful, most charming and sweet and affectionate. The term actually signifies much more than all these adjectives which are applicable to phenomenal objects, carried to their logical limits of super-excellence. Hence this term tadvanam has got tremendous significance in this context like other mystical words.

It is one's own Atman. There is no gainsaying in the statement that the Atman is the most dear, more dear than the most dear objects such as wife or husband, children, wealth, name, fame, etc. Man sacrifices things less dear for the sake of those which are more dear. To a miser, money is most dear. People say that he worships money. He is ready to make any sacrifice for increasing his bank balance.

Even to him, the Atman is dearer than his money, for only for the sake of his happiness that he hoards money.

Once a man with his wife and only child, was on this side of the Ganges. He had also a bundle on his head in which he had placed all his gold, money in the form of currency notes and most valuable records. He wanted to cross the river, but there was no boat. He decided to wade across the river, after hearing from some local people that the river in that particular place was not too deep. The wife took her seat on one shoulder and the child on the other. The bundle was on his head. Entering the water, he slowly moved on and on, while the level of the water also gradually increased. He was almost in the middle of the river. The current was strong. With both the hands en- gaged, one to hold the child and the other to hold the bundle on the head, he found it impossible to proceed further. One hand at least had to be freed to help wading. He consulted his wife as to what should be done. Both came to the conclusion that between the two, the wealth and the child, the latter was more dear than the former, and the man dropped the bundle of wealth from his head. With his one hand free, he found that he could move on with more ease. But, the level of water continued to rise. He had to free the other hand also. He found that he could not proceed further with his wife and the child. One of them had to be sacrificed. He consulted the wife again and decided to drop the child which was dearer than the wealth, and save the wife who was dearer than even the child. A few more feet he walked, rowing with both his hands, and with his dearest wife on his shoulder. The water level further went up. Now he could no longer walk. He had to swim. There were two alternatives-either throw his wife into the river, swim and save his life, or to allow themselves both to be carried away by the swift current of the river and lose both their lives. His wife was the dearest person in the world, more dear than the dear son and wealth. He did not now consult his wife as he did when he had to drop his bundle of wealth and his child. There was no time even to think. The decision he took was quick and that was that his Self was dearer to him than the dearest wife. And he dropped her into the water, swam across the river and saved himself,

In another instance when the whole house was ablaze, the father immediately escaped out of the house and then called out loudly that if anyone in that big crowd there, could save his wife and his only child caught up inside the house, he would give all his wealth. The man saved himself first, sacrificing his wife and child and then wanted to save his wife and child for which he was prepared to sacrifice all his wealth.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, this truth that the Atman is dearer than all the objects in all the three worlds, is shown by Sage Yajnavalkya in his immortal instructions to his own wife, Maitreyi (II-4-v and IV-5-vi). He says that the wife loves the husband not for his sake but for the sake of the Self. Similarly, the wife is loved by the husband not for her sake but for the sake of the Self. Then the Sage mentions the sons and says that they are not loved for their sake but for the sake of the Self. Starting with the dearest object, i.e., wife to the husband and husband to the wife, the Sage makes mention of sons, wealth, and other objects which are less and less dear. Finally, he says that all human love here is not for the sake of the object loved, but for the sake of the Self. The Self is the dearest. It is Love itself. Love is Atman. Love of the Atman is tautology like the phrases, Bliss of the Atman, Existence of the Atman, and so on. An adjective or verb when used with reference to the Atman loses its ordinary grammatical mean- ing. For, the Atman being infinite, Infinity itself, anything if connected with It loses its individual and separate existence and becomes one with the Atman, even as any fuel put in fire becomes fire losing its separate individuality.

This Atman-Brahman should be meditated upon as tadvanam, the most dear, most adorable and worshipful- this is the instruction of the Upanishad.

God-love is from the heart, rather than the intellect which always questions the 'why' and 'how' of everything.

One should have a heart-to-heart feeling or relationship with God when one worships whether in a temple or church or mosque or in one's own house. If a religion commences with fear of God, as very often said by thinkers, we can also say that religion culminates with the supreme love of God and complete fearlessness. It is not philosophical, in the sense that it is beyond all logic and reason. But, it has a philosophy of its own, which the rationalistic philosophy cannot discern. Even human love, love of one person for another, has something mystic behind it which no reason can explain. If that is the case with what we call the lower forms of love, what to speak of its highest, perhaps its transcendental form, the parabhakti as it is termed ! It is beyond all logical thinking and its nature is inexplicable. But the devotee experiences It. He may not be able to express It to another. Just as the Supreme, the Absolute, the Atman-Brahman is beyond all thought and speech, God- love transcends all forms of modifications of the mind and is beyond expression through words. Thus should one meditate on tadvanam, the transcendental Being who is non- different from the Supreme jnana and bhakti.

In mantras I-5 to 9 of the Kenopanishad it has been stated that Brahman is not anything that people worship here (vide nirguna-brahma-vidya) showing thereby that Brahman cannot become an object of worship and meditation. A question may arise as to whether the present vidya does not contradict the above mantras. No, is the answer. For, in this meditation also, the meditator should avoid the common error of externalising the Atman meditated upon as tadvanam. He should know that tadvanam is non-different from his Self, and therefore not an object to be meditated upon.

The result of this meditation on the Absolute as the most adorable being, the most lovable, is that the whole world will regard the meditator as an object of great love and adoration. The result is according to one's meditation, is the inviolable cosmic law. The whole world loves the meditator all at once, all simultaneously, not one after

another. This is difficult to grasp by the mind in its conditioned and limited nature. He becomes as though God- possessed, God-loved. He is now no more a mere human being which he was before. He is now a God-man, God walking on two legs on the face of this earth. He becomes the centre of affection of all beings, centre of all knowledge and power.

SECTION III

KATHA-UPANISHAD

8. NACHIKETA-VIDYA

(MEDITATIONS IMPARTED TO NACHIKETAS)

The Kathopanishad gives this meditation through a story which runs as follows: One Vajasravasa, also known by the name Gautama had a young son by name Nachiketas. He was a religious minded and pious person who strictly followed the injunctions of the scriptures in leading his life. Once, he performed the visvajit sacrifice, evidently with the desire to enjoy the pleasures of heaven after death. One of the rules of this sacrifice is that the sacrificer should give as gifts all that he possesses to deserving persons. Being not very rich, he gave to the priests a few old and feeble cows which he had, cows that were decrepit and barren. In the words of the Upanishad, these cows were 'that have drunk water, eaten grass and whose milk has been milked for the last time and which have lost all the organs', meaning that these cows could no more eat or drink, much less calve. Here some commentators explain by saying that Vajasravasa acted against the injunctions of the scriptures, by keeping for himself and his son, the good milch cows and gave in charity the old and useless ones. Others say that it might be that he was giving all the cows among which were some famished and dry cows also along with the good milch ones. In any case, the young Nachiketas, a simple, unsophisticated but sensitive boy felt within his mind that his father's action in giving such useless cows as gifts, was against the injunctions of the scriptures. Though diffident at first, he gathered courage and pointed out to his father indirectly his mistake by telling him: "O revered father, you have to give everything of yours as gifts, I am yours. To whom do you propose to give me as a gift?" Vajasravasa had no such idea of giving his son as a gift to anyone, as no father like him who is desirous of a happy life here and hereafter, could imagine such a gift. The father paid a deaf ear to his son's question. The son put the same question again. This time too, the father did not give any answer. When the son repeated the question for the third time, the father could not control

his resentment and said, "to Death I give you". The story says that the boy who wished to see that his father's words were not falsified, went to the abode of Death, Lord Yama. Yama was absent. The boy had to wait outside the gate. Three days and nights he remained there without food and drink. On the morning of the fourth day, Yama returned and heard from his men that a young boy, a mortal from the world below had come to meet him and was waiting outside the gate for three days without taking any food or drink. Yama, the Lord of Death also called dharmaraja, the king of righteousness, knows that keeping out such a guest without giving him shelter and food and granting his desires, would be productive of great disaster to him in the form of loss of offspring, cattle and wealth and all merit earned in previous lives. He, therefore, immediately went out, welcomed the boy, took him in and honoured him with all the usual things such as water for washing his feet, a seat to sit, a bath, food and drink. Then he enquired the purpose of his visit and also told him that as a recompense for the three days' waiting without food, he would grant him three boons. The three boons asked for by the boy were:

1) When I return home, my father should receive me without any anger and recognise me as his beloved son.

2) What is the mystery of the 'Universal fire' out of which the universe has been created?

3. What happens to the Soul after Death? Does it exist or not?ib dauong

The first boon was readily granted. In regard to the second boon, Lord Yama gives the meditation on the-universal fire-vaisvanara-agni, also known thence forward as Nachiketa-agni after the name of the boy. The Upanishad is very brief in regard to this meditation and has condensed the whole vidya in eight verses, xii to xix, in section 1 of the first chapter of the Upanishad.

Nachiketas said: "In heaven there is no fear of old age. and death. By transcending hunger and thirst, pain and sorrow, one rejoices in that world. O Death, you are the death of all worldly things, such as hunger, thirst, etc., and as such, you know the 'fire', the sacrifice, the meditation which leads to that heavenly world where the dwellers enjoy immortality. Please instruct me on this fire". The Lord of Death said: "The 'fire' which is the means for attaining heaven is hiranyagarbha, the support of the world. Please know that it is established in the intellect of the enlightened ones, men of Knowledge." The Upanishad says that the Lord of Death instructed Nachiketas on the details of the sacrifice or meditation. The latter being possessed of dis- crimination and dispassion, grasped the instructions fully. Pleased by the fitness of the disciple and finding in Nachi- ketas a sincere, ardent and fully qualified seeker after Truth, the Lord of Death presented him with a multiformed necklace. The Lord of Death also said that the 'fire' would henceforth be known by his name as Nachiketa-fire. This is how the vidya came to be known as Nachiketa-vidya. One who has been instructed by the mother, father and the teacher proper- ly, or by the vedas, smritis and the wise people, who has known it through the three means of knowledge, viz., direct perception, inference and scriptures, and who after acquiring the knowledge of the meditation reflects over it and after clearing all doubts practises the meditation and undertakes the three kinds of karmas, viz., sacrifice, study of the scriptures and charity, crosses over death and attains that heavenly world. He who through meditation knows. and realises hiranyagarbha, the cosmic Person, manifestation of Brahman who is the cosmic prana, cosmic intellect, cosmic mind and who is most adorable, attains supreme peace, result- ing from the cessation of all objectivity.

Everyone desires happiness, enjoyment of life here and hereafter. The scriptures prescribe a virtuous and pious life and performance of sacrifices with a view to get happiness in this world while alive and in

heaven after death. When one acts in accordance with the injunctions of the scriptures, even though it may be with the desire to enjoy happiness, one's mind is purified. This is the hidden secret in the karmas and rituals prescribed in the scriptures. The son of discrimination and dispassion is born of the father of sacrifices, charity and penance prescribed in the scriptures. Dispassion born of discrimination develops into spiritual aspiration to attain what is beyond the death of this phenomenon. The Lord of Death is seated, as it were, on the threshold of this world and the Beyond. Therefore, he is in the know of what is here and what is beyond. In one of the songs of the great Sage Sadasiva-brahmendra* he says: "When all this is pure Consciousness, what is there to speak and what is there which cannot be spoken, what is there to enjoy here and what is there that cannot be enjoyed!....." The sage speaks and does not speak, enjoys and does not enjoy! So Lord Yama is the best teacher, for he knows how to instruct on That which is Beyond in the language of the world. His instructions can be understood and grasped only by the mind which has transcended the physical and mental realms, symbolised here by the first two days' fasting at the door of the Lord of Death. All misconceptions such as, mistaking attachment for compassion, passion and greed for needs of life, and egoistic action for altruistic activity, will be removed and the mind made pure to receive the higher instructions. Through the first boon got by the first day's fast represent- ing physical discipline, Nachiketas became the master of the physical forces. His consciousness rose to the consciousness of virat. By the second boon which was the result of the second day's fasting symbolising mental discipline, he subdued the mind also over and above the senses. This resulted in the attunement to the whole cosmos, both the gross and the subtle. This is what is signified by the 'Nachiketa-fire', standing for hiranyagarbha. The mind, intellect, the ego and the subconscious all the four have been well disciplined result- ing in their merging in the universal mind, hiranyagarbha, known as vaisvanara-agni, the cosmic-fire. Fire (agni) is a terms used

in the Vedas in many places to indicate the Ultimate Reality. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita : "I, becoming or abiding in the body of living beings as vaisvanara associated with prana and apana, digest the four- fold food".

The meditation here is therefore, on hiranyagarbha, transcending the virat, after purifying the mind through dispassion born out of discrimination, brought about by preliminary practice of penance. The result is knowledge and power, due to the identification with virat and hiranyagarbha. They are not two different persons or entities but two levels of consciousness through which the seeker rises to the ulti-mate state.

9. ADHYATMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON ONE'S OWN SELF)

In the Kathopanishad wherein is given a number of vidyas, by the Lord of Death to his worthy disciple Nachi- ketas, this adhyatma-vidya is given in one verse (1-2-xii.) which runs as follows:

"tam durdarsam gudham-anupravishtam guhahitam gahvareshtham purana dhiram, adhyatma-yoga' dhigamena devam matva dhiro harshasokau jahati-A dhira, a spiritual hero is freed from joy and sorrow and all other pairs of opposites, by concentration of the mind on the Atman, after withdraw- ing it from the external and internal world of objects and by meditation on the most ancient God who is inscrutable, seated in the inaccessible heart located in the cave of the intellect and in the midst of misery".

One should start meditation on the Atman as if It is seated within one's body. The Atman, which is non-different from Brahman, cannot be located and limited spatially, for It is all-pervasive, more pervasive than the all-pervasive space. Still, to help meditation, the Lord of Death instructs Nachiketas to withdraw the mind from all objects both gross and subtle the gross objects outside and the subtle objects (thoughts) inside-and to concentrate on the small space within the cave of the intellect. The intellect or mind is here compared to a cave. Just as a cave in a mountain is in- accessible to ordinary men, this intellect also is very difficult to approach. The mind is always outgoing. For all practical purpose, it assumes the role of the subject and perceives all objects, but it itself cannot be easily perceived. It refuses to give up its subject-hood and become an object. It is some- thing like committing suicide. Who wants to die? No one will try to cause one's own death. The mind can become an object only to the Atman who is the real Subject. But when once this mind tastes, as it were, the Bliss of the Atman by concentration and meditation, it realises that its real nature itself is the Atman. It realises that it was all along the non-dual,

blissful Atman itself, and that it was due to some mysterious cause which is given the name of avidya or maya, that it was thinking itself as a limited mind always going out in search of pleasurable objects. The scriptures compare the mind's search for happiness in external objects, to the musk-deer running for the musk which is within itself. The deer, smelling musk, thinks that it is somewhere outside and starts running to get it. How can it get it? It is already within the deer. Any amount of running will not help it to attain it. Even so is the case of man who runs here and there to get happiness thinking that it is in the external objects. Happiness is really within in his own Atman, nay, it is the Atman itself.

The Upanishad says that this Atman is to be meditated as seated in the midst of misery, i.e., in the body and senses which are the sources of many miseries. Because of Its non- dual and all-pervasive nature, It exists even in the mind, in the organs and in the objects, both the pleasurable and the pain-yielding. It is difficult of being perceived, because It is as though covered by the names and forms of the objects. By a sharp and penetrating pure intellect the meditator should, with the help of the scriptures and his Master's instructions, pierce the objects, as it were, by negating the names and forms and contact the Atman. When once contacted, he realises the great truth that It alone exists here and all the names and forms are but Its manifestations or expressions.

The Atman should be meditated upon as the ancient Deity, says the Upanishad. The Atman being the cause- less cause of this universe, It existed even before creation. It is very difficult for the mind to conceive that 'supreme state' before creation. Who has seen that state? Who was there before creation? Even time comes into existence only after creation, because everything here including space, time and objects are products or effects of creation. So, such words as oldest and ancient deity, the first-born, the causeless cause, all-pervasive and similar terms used with reference to the Atman,

cannot convey the real state of affairs before creation. Still they are helpful for meditation. The meditator with their help transcends time, space and causation and becomes one with that Atman. The word 'puranam' in the mantra, though generally translated as 'old' or 'ancient' also has the connatation of being ever new and eternal, in this context. Again, the words 'ever new' and 'eternal' also are connected with 'time' which, as already said, is a part of the world created, and cannot therefore apply to the Atman before creation, and hence, the difficulty in this meditation experienced by the neophytes in the path.

The meditator should have intense aspiration (mumuk- shutva) if he wants success in meditation, Even if he possesses the other three qualifiications, i.e., discrimination, dispassion and all virtues comprised within the six-fold virtues (shat-sampat)-control of mind, control of senses, withdrawal of the senses from the objects, perseverence, complete faith in the words of the Master and scriptures and equilibrium of the mind-if his desire or aspiration for God is not intense, all his efforts may not bring in the desired result. The great Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa compares mumukshutva of an earnest and sincere sadhaka to the state of the mind of a person who is inside the water and not allowed to come out. Suppose someone stronger than you pushes you inside the river and presses down your head preventing you from rising up, thereby suffocating you. After a few minutes, what will be the intensity of your desire to come out of the water to breathe? Such an intensity of aspiration should the sadhaka possess to realise God, the Self within all.

The result of this meditation is that the meditator is freed from happiness and sorrow and other similar pairs of opposites. A doubt may arise as to why he should be freed from happiness. One can understand that through meditation, the meditator is freed from misery and sorrow. Why the Upanishad says that he is freed from happiness also? Is it not happiness the Goal of meditation? If so, he

should get all happiness as a result of meditation. This doubt arises as a result of some confusion in the mind. It is true that the Atman is defined as sat-chit-ananda, sat- ghana, chit-ghana and ananda-ghana. The word ananda is generally translated as bliss. By the word ananda, the scriptures do not mean sense happiness en- joyed through contact of the senses with their objects. It is this false sense-pleasure from which the sage is freed as a result of meditation. His happiness, the bliss, the ananda is non-different from the Self. It transcends both pain and pleasure which are experienced through the senses and the mind. It transcends, similarly, all the other similar pairs of opposites also such as merit and sin, good and evil, the beautiful and ugly, inside and outside and so on. That Supreme State of his is beyond all words. All that is said in the scriptures serves as pointers, arrow-marks to help the aspirant in his meditation.

It is said that once a sage named Jaigavishya practised a particular difficult samyam (deep meditation) on certain aspects of the mind. As a result, there arose in him the knowledge of the past ten cycles of creation. Another sage by name Avatya heard of this. He met Jaigavishya and asked him: "Please tell me what was the wonderful specta- cle of the ten cycles of creation which you saw ?" He replied: "Oh my dear friend, the whole spectacle was one picture of sorrow". Avatya was disappointed and disturbed. He enquired further: "How can it be? You are so much advanced in Yoga and yet you found nothing but sorrow! In the very beginning of the ashtanga-yoga, we are told under the discipline of yama, that one who has mastered the virtue of contentment alone gets unsurpassed joy." Jaigavishya smiled and replied: "Yes, what you say is true in the context of contentment in the early stages. After one gets this contentment, if one proceeds further in the path of Yoga, one would be seized with a great discontent. From the view- point of Supreme Bliss which the Atman is, all other satisfactions of the lower stages such as the knowledge of the

past cycles and similar things which one gets during the practice of Yoga, are of unbearable sorrow only".

10. PARAMA PURUSHA (KASHTHA)-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SUPREME PERSON, THE ACME OF PERFECTION)

This vidya is imparted by the Lord of Death, a perfect Master, to Nachiketas, an ideal disciple, and occurs in the Kathopanishad Chapter I, Section 3. (For the story through which the vidya is introduced please see Nachiketa vidya). The question of Nachiketas, a fully qualified aspirant, in reply to which this vidya is imparted is: "What is that which is different from virtue and vice, different from cause and effect, different from the past and the future? Some say It is and others say It is not; O Death, please tell me about that which transcends the death of all this phenomena, the knowledge of which leads to the greatest auspiciousness." In giving the answer to this question of Nachiketas, Lord Yama gives a number of meditations. One such meditation is the present one on the Supreme Person, the Acme of Perfection, parama purusha also referred to by the term kashtha.

This vidya states that one should meditate on that Being which abides in the lotus of one's heart, along with its reflection, the Jiva. This Being is Brahman both the nirguna (without attributes) and saguna (with attributes). One desirous of crossing this samsara should transcend the saguna and the nirguna and rest in the Absolute Brahman. Through the beautiful analogy of a chariot, the Upanishad points out the necessity of self-control on the part of the seeker after the ultimate Truth. In this analogy the master of the chariot, the chariot, the charioteer, the bridle, the horses and the road on which the chariot moves, stand for the jiva, (the individual soul), the body, the intellect, the mind, the senses and the objects, respectively. The master of this chariot will reach his destination safely and surely, only if the horses are well controlled by the charioteer with the help of the bridle. Even so, this jiva will certainly reach its destination, the Supreme Brahman, after a safe journey in this world, only if the

intellect controls the senses through the mind. The Upanishad says that the man who has as his charioteer, a discriminating intellect and who has his mind and senses under control, attains the end of the journey, the highest place of Lord vishnu (tat vishnoh paramam padam)

How should one meditate? One should start from the gross and go to the subtle, then the subtler, then the subtlest and thereafter the causal and finally reach that which is beyond the causal also-the senses, the subtle elements, the mind, the intellect, hiranyagarbha, the unmanifested and lastly the parama purusha. In these, each of the succeeding one may be said to be subtler than the preceeding ones up to hiranyagarbha. The unmanifested is the causal and the parama purusha is the acme, the culmination, the highest (sa kashta sa para gatih). The gradation in subtlety stated by the Upanishad with reference to the different objects of meditation starting from the senses and ending with the causal, the unmanifested, need not be taken literally. This is the view of Sage Badarayana which he has given expression to in his Brahma Sutras (vide Sutra III-3-xiv). He says that the intention of the sruti is to show that the Brahman-Atman is the highest and not to show that each later category is superior to the former one, because there is no spiritual gain in knowing that something is greater or smaller than something else, or one object is subtler or grosser than another object.

Continuing the instructions on meditation, the Lord of Death says to Nachiketas: "He, that Supreme purusha about whom you wanted to know, cannot be easily known or perceived by men of extroverted mind with their senses running riot and always immersed in the pleasures of sense life, for He is always hidden in beings." Where is He hidden? He is hidden behind all the objects, concepts and percepts and also the subject. To put it more correctly, He is veiled, as it were, by the objectivity of the objects and the subjectivity of the subject. But, says the Lord of Death, He can be seen and realised by a subtle,

one pointed, pure intellect, not by the sharp logic-chopping intellect. The intelligence of persons like Nachiketas who has spurned the pleasures of the three worlds like a piece of straw, alone can transcend the individual intellect, the modifications of which have taken the form of this manifold universes of pleasure and pain.

Sri Sankaracharya in commenting on this portion of the Upanishad (I-3-xii) points out the inscrutable nature of this mystery of God and His creation thus : "Alas, how un- fathomable and indescribable and variegated is this illusory power of the Supreme, that every man though in reality, is identical with the Supreme Entity, and is instructed as such by the guru and the scripture again and again, does not grasp the fact, 'I am the Supreme Atman', while even without being told, he accepts as his Self the non-selves constituted by the subject and object, the aggregate of the body and senses under the idea 'I am the son of so and so', 'I am so and so', 'I am the father of so and so', etc., though they are objects of perception, and hence come under the insentient objects like pot, cloth, etc."

A practical hint to help this meditation is contained in verse I-3-xiii which says: The discriminating seeker should first merge the organ of speech which is indicative of all the organs, into the mind. Then he should, through meditation, merge this mind into which all the senses have disappeared in the vijnana atman, the pure intellect which is the self of the mind and the organs and which is subtler and more pervasive than the others. In the third step which is the most difficult, he should merge the vijnana atman into the mahat (hiranyagarbha), its cosmic counterpart, and finally he should merge that also in the santa-atman, the Supreme Peace, the ultimate Self, the non-dual, pure Aware- ness. It is described as soundless, touchless, colourless, un- decaying, tasteless, eternal beyond time, odourless, without beginning, without end and beyond the cosmic phenomena, but ever constant, the non-dual sat-chit-ananda.

How this merging is to be done? Sages show the method through examples. The merging here is analogous to the merging of the rope- snake in the rope, the necklace in gold, the mirage water in the desert, the pot-space in the vast outer space, etc. When the illusion of the snake is removed by switching on a torch, we say that the snake is no more. Where has it gone? We may say that it has merged in the rope. Does it really merge? No. How can a snake merge in a rope? It is impossible, if the snake is real. So what really happens in this case is that the illusion is removed, and along with it the illusory snake also dis- appears. One comes to the firm conviction and realises the truth that the snake was never there at any time, and it is the rope that appeared in the form of the snake. So the word 'merging' is used in a figurative sense. Even so, the meditator has to realise the unreal and illusory nature of the senses first, by tracing them to their cause which is the mind. Having done this, by the same process he has to trace the mind to its cause which is the intellect. The intellect is then traced to its cause which is hiranyagarbha through the knowledge that the latter alone is the cause of the phenomenal world and that all the rest are effects. Finally, through the knowledge that hiranyagarbha, the first cosmic Person, the Self-born Brahma is also a superimposition on the Supreme Brahman, one's own Atman, the meditator becomes one with the ultimate santa-atman, the Infinite, the Whole.

One should not hang on to the illustrations allowing the proposition in hand to fade out in the background. All examples and analogies are like sign boards and they only point out the way of approach. Having understood their significance, one should leave them off and concentrate on the Self. The path to be traversed is most difficult to the non-discriminating mind. It is compared to the difficulty of one who has to walk on a razor's sharp edge. If you press your leg, it will be cut and if you do not press you will slip. Another example is the fate of a man who is caught in a mire. To get out of it, one should pull one leg first. In order to do it, he should press the other by which act he

sinks further down. If you do not make this attempt you will remain in the mire. So you are in a fix. Similar is the case of the unwise sadhaka. Here, as the Upanishad itself says, he should approach his Master, serve him well, and when he is pleased he will take you by the One hand and pull you out from the mire of samsara. should wake up from the sleep of ignorance which has caused the dream of this world. guru's grace, enables the meditator to cross over all the obstacles on the path. guru is non-different from one's Atman and God. All the three are in essence one. They are the names for the one Reality.

11. ANGUSHTA-MATRA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE PURUSHA OF THE SIZE OF THE THUMB)

Both the Kathopanishad and the Svetasvatara-upanishad give this meditation, meditation on the Atman in the lotus of the heart of the size of one's thumb.

In the Kathopanishad this vidya is given by the Lord of Death to his disciple, Nachiketas. (The story is given under nachiketa-vidya.) This relates to the third boon granted to Nachiketas by Lord Yama. Nachiketas asked: "O Lord, doubt arises consequent on the death of a man; for some say 'It exists' while others say 'It does not exist'. I would like to know what exactly is the truth. Kindly instruct me on this. This is the third boon which I ask from you" (1-1-xx). Nachiketas further explained his doubt: "O Lord of Death, kindly tell me of that which you see as different from virtue, different from vice, different from cause and effect and different from past and future" (1-2-xiv). In verse 1-1-xxix also, Nachiketas clarified his question and said: "O Death, tell me of that about which people entertain doubt, whether after death something exists or not, that thing the knowledge of which is calculated to lead to the greatest good". Among the various meditations given in reply, Lord of Death mentions this meditation in verses II-1-12 and 13 and II-iii-17.

The Svestasvatara-upanishad referring to the angushta- matra-purusha says in verses 8 and 9 of chapter V: "The jiva, the individual Soul, should be meditated as the manifestation of the Supreme Being. Being subtler than the subtlest, He is like the sharp point of a goad, extremely pure and intensely effulgent like the sun, and He Himself has assumed the form of the jiva of the size of one's thumb, and resides in the lotus of the heart which is almost of the size of the thumb. He appears as associated with the ego and the mind, the intellect and the heart. He is as subtle as a hair point divided into ten

thousand times and yet He is the infinite and He is to be meditated upon and realised".

The Upanishads instruct the meditator on the all- pervading, infinite Brahman, as located in one's own heart, the physical heart of the size of the thumb, to begin with. Even in the early stages of this meditation, the seeker would encounter with the difficulty of meditating on the Infinite, located in the finite heart, the fleshy organ of the size of the thumb. He has necessarily to give up the literal interpretation of these instructions and switch on to their esoteric meaning hidden behind the words. The heart is to be understood as the spiritual centre which is everywhere. It is not limited by anything like the circumference limiting a circle with a centre. Some compare the spiritual heart to a circle with centre everywhere and circumference nowhere. Because It, the Atman-Brahman while existing inside the heart, is also all-pervasive. The nearest analogy is space, the space within a pot and the space outside. Though seemingly the pot-space is limited and the outside space is limitless, really they are not two different entities but one only. Why? Because, the walls of the pot do not separate the two spaces. The walls also contain space and as such, there is only one infinite space, inspite of the apparent division as space outside the pot and that within. Even so is the Atman which is not limited by any object whatsoever. It is beyond all distinctions, beyond all pairs of opposites. It is beyond virtue and vice. It transcends both. It is beyond cause and effect which relationship exists only in the phenomenal world of space and time. It is beyond the triple concept of time as past, present and future which are really only Its manifestations. Sometimes It is described as the continuous 'present', which is devoid of past and future. This 'present' transcends time and space and also the chain of cause and effect.

isvara is said to be the cause and hiranyagarbha and virat, the effects. Brahman transcends all the three. It is be- yond the scope of the mind and speech. It cannot be thought of by the mind, much less expressed

through speech. At the same time, a pure mind, like that of Nachiketas can attain It, and through such a purified mind alone It can be realised as one's own Atman, residing in the lotus of the heart and pervading the whole body from the crown of the head to the tip of the toes. He is to be meditated as eternal with reference to the temporal world, and as non-changing to distinguish It from the ever-changing phenomena. This world as Brahman is non-different from Him. A world conceived as something different from Him is unreal, nay non- existent.

Death in this meditation refers to the death of the whole phenomena itself and not merely to the fall of this individual body. hiranyagarbha and even isvara are referred to as Death, for they cease to exist when the Absolute, the Atman- brahman is realised. Death can have existence only as long as the phenomena last. The realisation of the Truth brought about by the knowledge that the phenomenal world has really no existence apart from Brahman, brings about the death of Death also. As this Upanishad itself says, Death is a condiment to the Supreme to whom the whole phenomenal world of cause and effect becomes food as it were.

The result of this meditation is the realisation of the non-difference of the Supreme Brahman from one's own Atman. If anything is considered as other to the Atman, it is mithya, meaning it is an appearance put on by the Atman. An often cited verse the authorship of which is attributed to Acharya Sankara, says: "slokardhena pravak-shyami yaduktam grantha-kotibhih; brahma satyam jagan- mithya jivobrahmaiva na parah-I shall declare in half a verse that which is stated in tens of millions of scriptures; and that is, Brahman alone is the Truth, all the universe is mithya, an appearance superimposed on the Reality which is Brahman, and the individual jiva is verily Brahman alone and not anything other to Him".

12. EKADASA-DVARA-PURI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE ATMAN IN THE CITY OF ELEVEN GATES)

Kathopanishad Mantras i to viii in section 2 of chapter II, give this meditation on the Atman as the indweller of the city of eleven gates. This vidya is one among the many vidyas imparted to Nachiketas by the Lord of Death, Yama. This vidya as well as the other vidyas in the Upanishad are given as reply to the question of Nachiketas regarding the Absolute that transcends all phenomena where Death itself dies, that Absolute of which both death and immortality are shadows.

hpauram-ekadasadvaram-ajasyavakra-chetasah, anushtha- ya sochati vimuktascha vimuchyate, etadvai tat-The Lord of Death says: Of the Atman, the unborn, the pure unmoded Consciousness, there is the city of eleven gates; meditating on Him one does not grieve; one becomes freed and attains jivan-mukti and then attains videha-mukti; this Atman is that which is under discussion in the whole Upani- shad, O Nachiketas, this Atman is He about whom you wanted to know (II-2-i)-thus starts this vidya.

The city of eleven gates in which the Atman is to be meditated upon, is this body consisting of the eleven doors or openings, seven in the head, three inclusive of the navel in the lower half of the body and one on the top of the head. The eleven gates of the subtle body may be taken as the ten organs and the mind. The Bhagavad-gita also makes mention of a similar analogy, the city of nine gates, in verse 13 of chapter V. It says: "Renouncing all actions by the mind and remaining self-controlled, one rests happily in the nine-gated (the seven in the head and the two below the waist) city of this body without acting and without causing to act".

One should meditate that one is resting in the body and is therefore, different from the body, the gross, subtle and causal. Man generally identifies himself with the body and the senses and then he thinks that he rests in his house, on the ground, on a cushion seat, and so on.

Here, it is very clear what rests on a seat, placed on the ground, inside a house, is the body. But to a discriminating aspirant, it is possible to know the simple truth that the real 'T in him is as though resting in the body. Thus through this discriminating knowledge, he should free himself from the actions done by the body and mind, which do not pertain to the real 'I', the Atman who always remains as the witness in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. This resting of the Atman in one's body, has some sense only with reference to the ignorant man's thinking that he is resting on the cot or ground in his house. The truth is that the Atman is all-pervasive and is far from both action and inaction. "He is unchangeable"; "Though seated, as it were, in the body, He acts not nor is He tainted"; "He thinks, as it were, and moves as it were"-these and similar statements in the srutis and smritis support His transcendental and yet immanent nature.

In order to remove the erroneous concept that may creep in the mind of the sadhaka from the above mantra of the Upanishad that the Atman resides in this body, the Upanishad says in the next verse (II-2-ii), that as the moving sun He dwells in the heaven, as air He pervades the atmosphere and the interspace, as fire He dwells on the earth, as the soma juice He dwells in the jar kept in the sacrifice, He lives among men and gods, He exists in space, He is born in water as fish, He takes birth from the earth as plants and trees, He is born in sacrifice as its appendages and results, He emerges from mountains as rivers and springs; yet, He is unchanging in nature and He is the great Being. the cause, as it were, of the whole creation. He is to be meditated as internal to every object, not in the spacial sense, but in the sense that He is subtler than the subtlest, and therefore, beyond the senses and mind. He is to be meditated as eternal, not with reference to any length of time, but as He who transcends time. He is to be meditated as all-pervasive. His pervasion is not like water pervading a wet cloth, but as thread pervading the cloth. He is the essence behind all objects and concepts. The sum and sub- stance of this verse in the words of

Acharya Sankara, is that the universe has but one Self who is all-pervasive and there is no plurality of selves.

One should meditate on Him as He whom all deities also worship, who is the most adorable, who is as though sitting in the space inside the lotus of the heart and shining in the intellect as revealed Knowledge. The deities here may also be taken as the sense organs which are presided over by the deities. These sense-organs, as it were, worship the Atman by carrying to Him presents in the form of colour, sound. taste, smell and touch, just as the subjects in a country carry presents in the form of various articles to their king. The Atman is, therefore, to be meditated as different from the body, organs and vital force along with their activities. When through meditation, the meditator detaches himself, as it were, from the three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the causal, what remains is the Atman. Here this detach-ment from the body should not be misunderstood as death, the physical death, for after this death, there is rebirth, since the subtle and causal bodies still remain due to the persistence of ignorance. In the ultimate 'death' of the whole universe through meditation which alone is meant here, all the three bodies disappear when the ever-revealed. eveeffulgent, ever-present Atman alone remains, even as when the rope-snake disappears (in the analogy of the rope and snake) what remains is the rope alone.

No mortal lives by prana or apana or the organs, but all live by That on which all these depend for their very existence, viz., the Atman. After stating that among the ignorant some after death enter the womb for acquiring bodies and some others assume the form of inert objects according to their karmas and their thought at the time of death, the Upanishad instructs on the meditation on the Supreme Brahman in verse II-2-viii. One should meditate, says the Upanishad, on the Supreme as He who keeps awake and goes on creating desirable things even when the senses fall asleep, i.e., during the dream-state, and yet remains as pure, untouched and untainted by anything in this

universe; who is immortal, in whom all the worlds are as though fixed, and who transcends all and whom none can transcend.

The result of this meditation as given in the first verse (II-2-i) is videha-mukti, disembodied liberation, the highest attainment. He realises that he has been free for ever and that bondage never existed. It is also stated that such a person does not grieve. His realisation is, in the phraseology of Acharya Sankara in his manisha panchakam, that he is not only brahmaivaham-I am Brahman alone', but also 'jagat-cha-sakalam chin-matra vistaritam-I am also all this world which is an expansion or expression of Conscious- ness, I am the essence and also the expansion, the world before me'. The world cannot be dismissed as something unreal as some in their half-baked knowledge would like to do. A sadhaka in the early stages, in the name of dispassion, unwittingly tries to do away with the world by simply denying it mentally and turning a deaf ear even to its mini- mum demands. By this process, he only strengthens the bond- age which he on the other hand, earnestly wants to loosen and finally destroy. One should attain the knowledge of not only how to negate the world but also how to consume it in the final consummation. This is beautifully illustrated in the devi-mahatmya, wherein Goddess Durga not only killed the great demon Raktabija, but also drank all the blood without allowing it to fall on the earth. That demon had the boon that one drop of his blood falling on the earth would give birth to another Raktabija of equal strength and power and also the boon of himself multiplying through every drop of his blood. In the early stages of the battle, the assistants of Goddess Durga, the matrikas, were completely baffled, as by cutting the head of Raktabija, so many other Raktabijas sprouted from the several drops of his blood which fell on the ground. The whole battlefield was filled by innumerable Raktabijas. When all the gods and goddesses were thus seized with amazement and agony and did not know how to proceed further, the Divine Mother simply smiled and gently instructed Chamunda, her own mani- festation, to open

wide her terrible jaws, extend her tongue throughout the whole battlefield to receive all the blood that was shed as the matrikas went on cutting the heads of the Raktabijas. Chamunda thus drank all the blood and thus prevented it from falling on the ground. The blood ceased to reproduce further Raktabijas and in no time the divine forces were able to eliminate the demonaic forces. Hence, it is not mere negation of the world, but its consumation by oneself merging in the infinite consciousness that results in complete freedom which is videhamukti, 'disem- bodied liberation in which one experiences perfection alone in this world which has emanated from the Supreme God who is Perfection itself.

13. BHAS-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE EFFULGENCE)

bhas-vidya immediately follows the meditation on the Atman, limited, as it were, by the body, the city of eleven gates. This vidya is contained in mantras ix to xv of section 2 of chapter II of the Kathopanishad. These mantras contain the instructions of Lord of Death to his young disciple, Nachiketas, whose name has become a byword for real dispassion born out of discrimination. Sri Sankaracharya, the commentator, in his introductory remarks to this vidya says: "Since the knowledge of the unity and non-dual nature of the Atman though validated by proofs and reiterated more than once in the preceding portions of the Upanishad, it cannot and does not enter into and get established in the hearts of those aspirants whose minds get swayed by arguments of logicians who argue for argument's sake or to win over the opponents, the followers of other schools of thought, and whose aim is not the ultimate Truth. The Upanishad in order to bring such seekers back again to the Upanishadic track, starts instruction on this bhasvidya and other vidyas that are contained in the succeeding portions of the Upanishad."

The instructions on this meditation starts with three illustrations, those of fire, air and sun. Fire which has no particular form and therefore invisible, assumes the forms of the fuel which it burns and becomes visible to the eyes and hot to the touch. Fire is really one, but appears to be many when it enters the various fuels such as wood, wick, candle and the like. In spite of its contact with the different objects it burns, it remains separate from them and transcends all of them. Even so is this Atman that is one and imperceptible to the senses, by entering into the beings, appears as many with different names and forms, and still exists beyond all and separate from all.

As one air (prana) assumes different names and forms according to the different beings it enters into, even so, the one Atman abiding in

the heart of all beings appears as though having different forms and still remains transcend- ing all.

The third illustration of the sun shows the unattached and pure nature of the Atman which has been said in the previous two illustrations of the fire and air as having entered into all beings. Although the Atman is all-pervasive and resides in all beings occupying all space from the crown of the head to the tip of the toes, It is not tainted in the least by the miseries and pains nor does it experience pleasures and joys, even as the sun is not at all affected in any way, favourably or unfavourably, by the healthy or defective condition of the eyes which are helped by the sun to see objects, or by the impurity or purity of objects illuminated by it.

The 'I' in me, which is really the Atman, is untouched by the joys and sufferings of the mind. But by super- imposing them on the Atman due to ignorance, I say 'I am happy', 'I am unhappy', and so on.

What is this ignorance? It is a mysterious something which defies all enquiry and definition. It is neither existent nor non-existent. This ignorance does not really inhere in one's Self. The snake, the silver, the mirage water and dirt superimposed upon a rope, a mother of pearl, a desert and sky respectively do not really exist as the distortions of rope, mother of pearl, and the rest. But the snake, etc. appear as such because of the superimposition of the false notions (snake, etc.) on the real substances (rope, etc.) which provide the base for them (the snake, etc.). The substances which serve as substratum are not tainted by the objects superimposed on them, for the former are outside the notions falsely superimposed. Similarly, people after having superimposed on the Atman the false notions of action, agent and the result of action, experience misery of birth, death, etc. But the Atman, though It is the essence as it were in all, is not affected in the least by the sorrows of the world arising from the false superimposition, because It is dinstinct from the world superimposed and It is extraneous to the unreal superimposition.

The Atman should be meditated as seated in the heart, as the one and non-dual Being, the controller and the inner Self of all, who makes the one, non-dual Essence appear as multifarious. It is the eternal among the ephemeral. It is the Consciousness in the conscious beings and It is That which dispenses the fruits of actions and fulfills desires.

Verse xiv says: The sages perceive that indescribable Supreme Bliss as 'this is That', although It is beyond the reach of the mind and speech of ordinary mortals. How shall I know That? Does It shine by Its own light? That which is self-effulgent-how does It appear? Is It seen distinctly like an object of our intellect or not? The next verse gives the reply that It is both self-effulgent and shines distinctly and multifariously. The verse runs as follows:

"na tatra suryo bhati na chandra tarakam,

nema vidyuto bhanti kuto'yam-agnih;

tam-eva bhantam-anubhati sarvam,

tasya bhasa sarvam-idam vibhati-

"There the sun does not shine, neither do the moon and the stars, nor do these flashes of lightning; then how can this fire shine there? Because of His shining all these shine; through His effulgence all these are variously illumined."

One should meditate on Him as the supreme Effulgence, the pure Consciousness by which the great illuminators of the world such as the sun, moon, stars, fire, and the like get their power of illumination. Without Consciousness, the Atman, how can the sun, moon, stars, etc., exist at all? Many think that it is these illuminants that illumine the world. Yes, it is true in the pragmatic sense. Even the illusory world of the dream, which also contains such luminaries as the sun, moon, etc., also cannot have its existence without Consciousness, the Atman. Why, for that matter, who illumines the darkness and the absence of everything of the deep sleep state, if not the same Atman! The

pragmatic waking world and the illusory dreaming world and the complete void of the deep sleep-all the three are illumined by the light of Consciousness, the Atman-Brahman.

The seeker in his meditation should not stick to these illustrations of the fire, air and the sun given in this vidya. That will defeat the purpose of the illustrations. They are only to help the meditator to go beyond the objects and concepts and keep his purified mind fixed on the Conscious- ness behind them, which remaining transcendental beyond the reach of the mind and senses, expresses itself as this world phenomena in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

Once a monk related the following incident: A disciple asked his Guru: 'O revered master, please instruct me how Truth Absolute expresses itself'. The master kept quiet for a few moments. Then he lifted up the walking stick which he was having in his hand, and showed it to the disciple. Next moment, the master stood up and quietly walked away without uttering a word. The disciple, though an ardent and earnest seeker, was puzzled. But he had an inkling that there was some hidden significance in the master's action which he could not discern for the time being. He was pondering over it for many days. Then he happened to meet a brother disciple who was much senior to him, and he told the elder one what had happened to him the other day with the master and wanted a clear explanation of the significance of the master's action. The elder one said: "You have been pondering over it all these days. What conclusion you have arrived at? Please tell me that first, and then I will tell you what the master meant by his action". The junior said: "I think most probably the master was trying to convey to me that Truth expresses itself as palpabaly as a raised stick in front". Then the elder remarked: "Your conclusion is alright as far as it goes, but why do you go on theorising about it so much?" The junior disciple was somewhat surprised and retorted: "Then what is your under- standing about it?" Immediately, the elder disciple who had also a

walking stick with him, raised his stick and then went away without saying anything.

The monk who was reciting this incident then explained that most of the sadhakas are like the junior disciple. The world which is the expression of Truth, is like a stick in the hand of God to demonstrate the experience of Truth. The sadhakas, nay all people, are seeing the world with the umpteen objects, as the disciple saw the raised stick in the hands of the master, with his hand, the fingers, the nails, the shirt sleeve, the nature of the wood with which the stick was made, and so on and so forth. In seeing these, they lose sight of the Truth which the masters want to communicate. Truth cannot be communicated without reference to objects which are illustrations only, and yet, the objects of illustrations can never be the Truth by them- selves. This world is God's self-expression. It is pitiable that the very illustrations which are intended to help the realisation of the Truth, become a distraction or obstruction to that realisation in the case of those sadhakas who go on theorising about the illustrations.

So, in these meditations one has to hear the illustrations, understand the import behind them using one's purified intellect. Thereafter, one has to give up the illustrations and go beyond them and their concepts and see the Truth. The world being the self-expression of Truth Itself, is shining as clearly as a fruit in one's hand or as the walking stick in the illustration cited above. Every form of life and no- life, every action and inaction and every change and non- change that come in front of us has to be perceived as the expression of Truth through our own direct experience. Answer is no answer, question is no question to the master. All is the expression of Truth. It should be so to the disciple. This state has to be attained through Knowledge which, as it were, dawns when the ignorance is removed through meditation.

The result of this meditation on the Effulgence is attain- ment of Spiritual Effulgence, the pure Awareness whose self-expression is all

this universe. The meditator becomes possessed of peace and happiness.

14. ASVATTHA-VRIKSHA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON BRAHMAN AS THE SACRED PEEPUL TREE)

This vidya occuring in the Kathopanishad chapter II, section 3, verses i to iv, prescribes a meditation on Brahman with the help of the analogy of the asvattha-vriksha, the sacred peepul tree. The tree of life in generality is inclusive of God who is compared to the root of the tree. Even as the root and the stem with its branches, leaves and the rest form what we call the tree which is an organic whole, God and the world are not two different entities but one organic whole. They may be said to be two phases, as it were, of the Absolute. As the root is not visible to the eyes, even so God also is not perceivable by the senses.

The asvattha tree is impermanent, but appears as though permanent. The word asvattha means that which does not exist tomorrow. This tree of samsara is ever changing and it finally disappears when the knowledge of Truth dawns. It is called vriksha (tree) because of the root meaning 'capable of being felled down'.

There is a similar analogy in Srimad-bhagavadgita (XV- 1 to 4) which says that the wise speak of the indestructible asvattha tree having its root above and branches below whose leaves are the metres (chhandamsi), whose branches are spread above and below, which is nourished by the three gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas, whose buds are the sense objects, whose branches stretch forth below in the world of men ending in karmas; neither its form, nor its origin and end, nor its existence is perceived as such here; and after cutting this firm rooted tree with the sword of dispassion, one should seek for that supreme Goal.

The Svetasvatara-upanishad also citing the same analogy of the tree, says that He, the supreme Lord, stands like a tree, rooted in his own glory. He is one without a second and immovable and by Him the whole universe is filled (III-9).

In the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, Sage Yagnavalkya makes mention of this tree of life in his question to the assembly in king Janaka's court (III-9-xxviii).

One should meditate on this tree of Samsara as possess- ing the unique feature of having its root above and not below as in the ordinary trees. But here the word 'above' is not that which is the opposite of 'below'. It means most subtle, subtler than the subtlest. A cause is said to be The root of this asvattha tree of subtler than its effect. this universe which is Brahman is the cause of all causes and effects and which has no cause for itself. This root is said to be above the trunk, branches and the other parts of the tree which go to form the universe. This root is to be meditated as Brahman, the non-dual Awareness on which is fixed, as it were, all the worlds. Yet It transcends all. None transcends It.

A beautiful realistic description of this tree of samsara is given by Acharya Sankara, in this context, in his commentary on the first verse (Kathopanishad, II-3-i) which is "This tree of samsara reproduced here almost verbatim: consists of many evils such as birth, old age, death, sorrow and the like. It changes itself every moment, in as much as no sooner it is seen, its nature is destroyed like magic, water in a mirage, or a city in the sky. It ceases to exist It is like the stem of a plantain ultimately like a tree. tree without anything substantial inside. It causes hundreds of doubts in the minds of the ignorant sceptics. Its reality is determined in its true nature by the seekers of Truth. Its essence lies in its root which is the supreme Brahman. This tree grows out of the seed of nescience, desire and action, the Unmanifested. Its sprout is hiranyagarbha, the saguna-brahman, the cosmic Person. It has for its trunk, the diverse subtle bodies of all creatures. It grows with the help of the water of desire. Its tender sprouts are the objects of senses. Its leaves are vedas, the smritis, logic, learning and instruction. Its lovely flowers are the karmas such as sacrifices, charity, austerity and the like. Its tastes are the experiences of happiness and

sorrow. Its infinite fruits are the means of subsistence of beings. This tree has for the nests, the seven worlds built by the birds which are the living beings from Brahma downwards. There is great uproar, rendered tumultous through the various sounds arising from dancing, singing, instrumental music, clapping of the hands, laughing, pulling, crying and exclaiming 'alas', 'alas', 'leave me', 'leave me' caused by joy and grief rising from enjoyment and suffering. This tree is felled down by the axe of detachment born out of the realisation of identity of Brahman and the Self as inculcated in the maha-vakyas."

One should meditate on the universe as emerging out of Brahman and moving in Brahman which is a great terror like an uplifted thunder bolt. It is out of fear for this Being that fire burns, the sun shines and gods like Indra, Vayu and the Lord of Death discharge their duties. This same idea is voiced in Tai. Up. II-8-i.

One should not and cannot separate the tree from its roots. Because a tree includes its roots. We may say the root is a part of the tree. But the truth is that it is the tree itself. When we say a tree, we do not exclude its root, for a tree is not the whole tree without the root. It is the root that supplies nourishment to the tree with its trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. When once you separate the root from the rest of the tree, or the rest of the tree from the root, the tree dies and what remains is no more a tree. Even so, the universe has Brahman as its root which cannot be separated from the universe by any means. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that Brahman is that from which all this universe has its origin, in which it rests and into which it dissolves (III-1-i). The Brahma Sutras in its second sutra of the first section of the first chapter, establishes that the root of this universe is Brahman alone and not anything else. Just as root is the tree, Brahman is the world. We should not separate Brahman from the world. When one, in ignorance, thinks oneself as separate from Brahman, one commits the sin of separating the in- separables. One suffers the result of this great sin, in the form of transmigratory life. One not only suffers

but dies, one corrects the mistake and stops committing the sin of not once but again and again in innumerable births, until separating oneself from the one, non-dual Whole which Brahman is.

The Upanishads speak of creation not to establish the existence of a world created apart from Brahman, the creator, but to show the non-difference of the cause and effect, as in the oft-quoted examples of clay and pot, thread and cloth, etc. The creation, whether it is sudden creation (yugapat-srishti) or gradual creation (krama-srishti), is a mysterious process, as mysterious as the creation of the dream world, the creation of the rope-snake, the mirage water and the like. As long as the individual 'T' is there, the 'you' and the rest of the world will be there.

One morning a Sufi saint was standing on the verandah of his house. He saw at a distance a few persons coming towards his house. He took them to be policemen in mufti coming to arrest him. He therefore started running. Those persons seeing a man coming out of the house and running. thought that he was a thief, and therefore, pursued him. The saint ran hither and thither and finally jumped over the wall of a graveyard and hid himself under a big tomb. Those persons also followed him into the graveyard and stood before the Sufi saint. The Saint asked: "Why are you here?" They replied: 'Because you are here'. Then, those persons queried the Saint: 'Why are you here?' He replied 'Because you are here'. The world comes with the concept of 'T', and the concept of 'T' comes with the world. I am' because the world is, and the world is because I am'. Both are really nothing but Brahman in the guise of the subject and the object.

This meditation on Brahman with the help of the imagery of the asvattha tree, results in the identification with Brahman. The meditation helps to withdraw from the phenomena and to turn one's gaze inward and to behold the Light of the Immutable Substratum, the changeless Noumenon.

15. ASTI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON BRAHMAN AS EXISTING)

asti-vidya is imparted by the Lord of Death to Nachiketas and occurs in the Kathopanishad mantras xii to xv of section 3 of the second chapter. This vidya, coming as it does in the concluding section of the Upanishad, may be said to give the gist of the instructions contained in the preceding five sections (the three sections of the first chapter and the first two sections of the second chapter).

The third question of Nachiketas was whether any ulti- mate Reality exists after death, not the ordinary death of this body, but the final death of the whole phenomena of this universe. If It exists, what is It like and how to realise It? He himself has hinted that It is that which is beyond world-consciousness, that which remains after eliminating the whole content of creation (vide mantra I-2-xiv).

"That which is designated in the scriptures as Atman and Brahman cannot be an object of the intellect and can- not, therefore, be specifically apprehended as 'It is such and such'. It cannot also be perceived on the cessation of the activities of the intellect for the obvious reason that then there will be no instrument of perception. Therefore, what is termed as Brahman and Atman cannot have any real existence. That which is cognised by the instrument of cognition can be said to exist and that which is not cognised by it has necessarily to be non-existent, is a well known fact in the world. Hence, all Yoga to realise Brahman is useless and Brahman is to be understood as non-existing inasmuch as It cannot be cognised." Presuming such a doubt in Nachiketas, the Lord of Death gives these instructions on meditation on Brahman as that which exists and should be known from those Seers who have perceived It as existing, rather Existence itself.

"asti-ityeva upalabdhavyah tattva-bhavena cha ubhayoh,

asti-ityeva upalabdhasya tattva-bhavah prasidati the Self is first to be realised as existing and then as It really is. Of these two aspects, the real nature of the Self that has been known as merely existing, becomes favourably disposed for Self-revelation" (II-3-xiii).

According to this translation of the mantra, the two aspects of the one Reality, the immanent and the trans- cendental are to be taken into consideration for meditation. Some commentators are of the opinion that the two aspects refer to 'Being' and 'non-being'. According to them, the mantra means: "Of the two, the 'Being' alone is to be realised as the Reality. To him who realises the 'Being' alone, the Truth reveals itself". To realise the nature of the Atman which is both 'Being' and 'non-being' at the same time, which is neither and which transcends all (Being, non- being, not-Being, and not-non-being), one should have the firm faith (sraddha) in one's own Master who instructs on Him. Being instructed by the Master, faith gradually leads one to the intuitional perception of the Truth and finally, through meditation on astitva (Beingness), there flashes that indescribable, inscrutable and unthinkable Atman in which the aspirant gets established.

In the phraseology of the Mandukya Karika, the Atman called is asparsa and the method of Its attainment is asparsa-yoga, the yoga of non-contact, for there is neither the subject to contact, nor the object to contact with. It can, at best, be described as 'It is' or merely IS. It transcends the individual aspects of visva, taijasa and prajna and the corresponding universal aspects of virat, hiranyagarbha and isvara. It transcends both purusha and prakriti, the akshara and kshara, the imperishable and the perishable. The Bhagavad-gita uses the epithet: purushottama-the Supreme Person who transcends the purusha and prakriti.

This vidya of the Upanishad, as in the case of similar vidyas, gives a meditation which is not the ordinary Yogic meditation which the neophytes practise in the early stages. It is not that is taught in any of

the yoga institutes in many parts of the world. In this vidya, it is the Atman that practises, not the mind and the intellect. It is the Atman meditating on the Atman. Here, the first 'Atman' is not the subject, the meditator, nor the second 'Atman' the object of the verb 'meditating'. It is the intuitive perception of, the direct realisation of the Atman in all beings, all things external and internal, gross and subtle and also the causal, and also of everything in the Atman.

What is the result of this meditation? The meditator attains Immortality here and now. He himself becomes, as it were, the Atman-Brahman, his Goal of meditation. There is no more the distinction of the seeker, the seeking and the sought, which existed earlier. All desires fall off, as there is nothing other than Him to desire for. The Upani- shads express this supreme experience as that in which the knots of the heart are shattered, as it were, the knots of avidya, kama and karma-nescience, desire and action. The three knots may also refer to the three gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas, for the meditator is now beyond the three gunas. He is called a gunatita-one who has transcended the three gunas for he has gone beyond even the state of guna-samyatva, the isvara state. This state is also referred to as suddha-sattva, the extremely pure sattva state which has no traces of rajas and tamas. Or, the three knots may be the tripura, the three cities, the three states of waking, dreaming and deep-sleep. His present state which trans- cends the three states, is given the name turiya, the Fourth. To those who object to this epithet being used to that supreme, nameless, formless condition or experience, the scriptures say that It may be designated as turiyatita, that which transcends turiya. It is kaivalya, the absolute Aloneness.

By all these descriptions, one should not jump to the conclusion that It is all sunya, some kind of indescribable void. It is not, for the scriptures say that such a knower who has realised this. Absolute lives in this world as a jivanmukta or a videhamukta. He does not lose the

world. nor the world loses him. The world is one with him and he is one with the world. None is a stranger to such a Sage of realisation.

Once a monk was walking along the right side of the road which is allotted for the pedestrians. A rash cyclist dashed against him. He fell down and became unconscious. The cyclist without caring for him went his way. After a few minutes, one of the monk's friends, a great devotee who happened to pass by that way, saw the monk lying in a semi-conscious state. He at once brought some water, sprinkled it on his face and fanned him with a folded cloth. Slowly, the monk regained consciousness. The friend went to a nearby tea-shop and fetched a cup of hot tea and gave it to him. He slowly took the tea. Seeing that he had fully regained consciousness, the friend asked him: 'O revered monk, do you recognise me?' The monk said: 'Yes'. 'Please tell me who I am'-said the friend. The monk re- plied: 'It is He who came in a cycle and pushed me down'. The friend thought that he had not fully regained conscious- ness and thinking that he would remind him of his own. identity, said: 'No, no, I am your friend and devotee (So and so); the cyclist who caused your fall has escaped'. The monk smiled at him and said: 'Yes, He caused my fall, He escaped, He came back, He bought the tea and He is talking to me'. The friend then understood the real mean- ing of the monk's words. He realised that the monk was referring to God whom he was seeing in all beings and in all doings.

SECTION IV

PRASNA-UPANISHAD

16. APARA-VIDYA-1

(MEDITATION ON THE LOWER BRAHMAN-1)

This meditation is given in chapter I of the Prasna- upanishad by Sage Pippalada as answer to the question of one of his disciples by name Kabandhi, a descendant of Katya. The question was: "bhagavan, kuto ha va imah prajah prajayante?-Venerable Sir, from what indeed, are all these beings born?"

The reply given by the Sage is a lower form of meditation which is combined with rites, apara-vidya. Of the six quest- ions and their answers which deal with six meditations in this Upanishad, the first three deal with the lower knowledge and the second three with higher knowledge. This meditation is on saguna-brahman, hiranyagarbha also called Brahma, the creator of this cosmos. He having practised meditation and rites conjointly in his previous life, being full of that thought, is said to be born at the commencement of this cycle of creation, as hiranyagarbha, the Lord of all beings, sentient and in-sentient. He first created a couple, rayi and prana. These two terms in this upanishad stand for matter and energy, the eater and the eaten, the subject and the object. One should meditate on the sun as identical with prana, the eater, and on the food eaten as identical with the moon. Then he should meditate on the identity of the sun and the moon, both being manifestations of the same hiranyagarbha. When no distinction as superior or inferior is made, then everything may be classed as food, the eaten, for everything is absorbed by something which is superior to it or subtler than it. But when the distinction is made, then there are the two, the food and the food-eater.

Similarly, everything is to be meditated as prana, the eater, which is non-different from matter or food that is eaten. Now both the prana and the food are one. Because they are absorbed into hiranyagarbha, even as the sun pervades and absorbs within its light all the directions,

the east, west, north, south, the four intermediate directions, as also the zenith and the nadir.

The wise know the One that is possessed of all forms, all light, the resort of all, the one consciousness and the life of all creatures and the source of all beings.

These two, the energy and matter, here referred to as the sun and the moon, produce all the creatures. This very couple manifests as time, the year. This very year again becomes the two courses, the northern and the southern, consisting of six months each, well known as the uttarayana and dakshinayana, when the sun moves towards the north and the south. The moon or the world of the moon, the pitrloka, is attained by those who are ritual- ridden. This is the inferior world and those who enter it after death as a result of the ritualistic and philanthropic actions performed here in this world during their life, return to this world again when the results of their actions are exhausted. This path taken by them is also called the path of the manes, the path of smoke and darkness. Those who along with the rituals and pious actions, practise meditation, pass beyond the world of the sun through the northern path and attain the higher worlds, the worlds of the celestials, the highest among them being the world of hiranyagarbha.

One should meditate on the sun or the time or year, the symbolic expression of hiranyagarbha, possessing either five feet in the form of the five seasons (autumn and winter to be taken as one season) and twelve limbs in the form of the twelve months, or as endowed with six spokes re- presenting the six seasons and seven wheels in the form of seven horses in the chariot of the sun (the seven colours in the spectrum), as the cause of all the beings, of the whole universe of matter and energy.

The seeker should then meditate on the 'month' as the Lord of all creatures, the representative of time, constituted of the couple,

matter and energy, symbolised through the dark and bright fortnights. To those who meditate thus, the difference between the dark and bright fortnights vanishes, meaning that they realise the identity of the subject and object in hiranyagarbha.

He should then meditate on day and night, as energy and matter, or prana and food and realise their oneness. Food is, therefore, nothing but the Lord of all creatures. From that the human seed issues and from the seed are born all these beings.

The visible result of this meditation practised by the householders is the attainment of both son and daughter. The invisible result is the attainment of the world of the moon after death. The Upanishad also mentions the result for those celibates who combine meditation with rites or those forest-dwellers and monks who practise meditation alone, as attainment of brahma-loka, the world of hiranya- garbha.

By the practice of such meditations, one gradually comes to realise the great secret truth about the creation of this universe. This universe is in fact the eternal, effulgent, infinite Consciousness alone. It generates, as it were, within Itself what we generally call space which is non-different from Itself. Then emenates air from the Space-Conscious- ness. From Air-Consciousness appears as though fire which is also nothing but Consciousness. The Fire-Consciousness expresses itself as Water and then Earth. So all these five elements are non-different from Consciousness. These are called tanmatras in sanskrit. They are the principles of sound, touch, form or colour, taste and smell. subsequent quintuplication of these five subtle elements into gross elements and the formation of infinite number of universes with their infinite number of objects by the permutation and combination of these elements, are all within that infinite Consciousness which remains unchanged in- spite of all these changing phenomena appearing within itself.

For everything that happens here in this phenomenal world we attribute some cause or other. We are habituated to put questions such as why and how with reference to any-thing and everything. To the discriminating spiritual seeker, the so-called immediate cause attributed by the lay- man for any incident, does not satisfy his enquiring mind and in his search for the ultimate cause he hits at the Divine Principle, the causeless Cause of all phenomenal causes and effects. Once a wealthy and philanthropic man was giving a feast for a thousand people as an act of charity with the desire to earn merit which bestows happiness here and hereafter. One of the items in the menu was curd, the supply of which was arranged with an old woman who had a modest dairy farm. When this woman was carrying the big pot of curd on her head, there was a strong breeze and the lid fell down from the pot. She took it immediately and replaced it on the pot. It so happened that at that very time, a kite was flying above with its prey, a snake in its beak. That snake due to the pain it was suffering spilt its poison and that fell exactly into the pot of curd when it was open for a few seconds, the interval between the falling off the lid and its immediate replacement. The woman completely unaware of this happening, delivered the curd to the host. The guests were sumptuously fed. And all of them died of snake poison.

Now the question was raised as to whom the sin of killing a thousand persons by poisoning, should go. The parties directly involved in or connected with this incident were: (i) the host (ii) the men who served the curd (iii) the woman who supplied the curd (iv) the breeze that blew off the lid of the pot (v) the snake that spilt its poison and (vi) the kite which was flying with the snake. Can we attribute the sin to any of these six? A little reflection will reveal the fact that none of them can be said to be the cause of the killing the thousand people. None of the six had the least intention of killing them. All the six were innocent. Then who was the sinner? A thousand pious people had been killed. The answer can only be 'none'. The story says that a wise

reply to the question was given by king Vikramaditya (with whom this story is said to be connected) who ruled this country with Ujjain as the capital in the fourth century A.D. The answer given by the king was: "He who attributes the sin to any one of the six parties involved in the incident, is the sinner". This is another way of putting the fact that none of them was the sinner. Similar is the case with all incidents that appear to happen in this phenomenal world. The discriminating spiritual seeker will find the supreme Divine Principle alone can be said to be the cause, call that Principle, God or Cosmic Law, or niyati, ritam, or the Absolute who is transcendental and immanent in every atom of this phenomenal creation. From the view-point of the Absolute, there is neither cause nor effect. That alone is.

17. PURUSHA-VIDYA-1

(MEDITATION ON THE SUPREME PERSON)

In chapter IV of the Prasna-upanishad this meditation on the supreme purusha is explained. The instructions for meditation are given in the form of an answer by the great sage Pippalada to the question put by one Sauryayani Gargya, the grandson of Surya in the family of Garga. The question is: "O adorable Sir, which are the organs which go to sleep in this man, which keeps awake in him, who is the deity who experiences dream, who experiences happiness and in whom do all get merged?" There are five parts in this qustion. The first part is about visva, the experiencer of the waking state at whose cessation of activity, one goes to sleep. The second part relates to that entity in man, viz., prana, whose function is to maintain the body in all the three states. The third relates to the taijasa, the experiencer of the dream world; the fourth to the prajna, the experiencer of the deep-sleep; and the fifth to turiya, the substratum for the prana and all the three states, which is untouched by them. Thus the questioner wants to know the nature of the Absolute Self, the Atman-brahman, the supreme Person, whose manifestation or expression is prana along with the worlds of waking and dreaming and of their absence in deep-sleep, swoon and death.

The Upanishad starts with an analogy, the analogy of the sun and its rays. The rays of the sun become unified in the setting sun and they become manifest when the sun rises again. Are the rays, the light and the effulgence different from the sun? Really, they are not, for there are no rays without the sun, and there is no sun without the rays. Still we say the rays come out from the sun when it rises and are absorbed in the sun when it sets. It is the very nature of the sun to send out its rays and absorb them back. Even so, the whole world of objects and concepts is absorbed in the mind during deep sleep, and therefore, in that state the person does not see objects, does not hear sounds, nor

does he taste any dish. He does not smell any odour or touch any object. Similarly, his motor-organs also do not function.

The fires of life (pranas) alone remain awake. These fires are to be meditated as the sacrificial fires. The house- holder's fire (garhapatya) is the down-going breath (apana). The southern fire (dakshina or anvaharyapachana) is the diffused breath (vyana). The oblation fire (ahavaniya) is the upgoing breath (prana). The equalising breath (samana) is the priest (hota). The two functions of inhalation and exhalation are the two oblations offered in the sacred fire. The mind is the sacrificer and the desired fruit of sacrifice is the vital function called udana which leads the sacrificer, the mind to Brahman, the Immutable, as though to heaven, during deep-sleep, when the mind is withdrawn from waking and dreaming worlds.

In the dream state, it is the mind that experiences pleasure and pain. Both the real and the unreal, the seen and the unseen, the heard and unheard are the projections of the mind.

Sri Acharya Sankara in commenting on the relevant mantra affirms the truth of this statement with all force at his command. He says to the opponent: "Please hear the purport of the Upanishadic mantra by giving up all conceit. for not through conceit can the hidden import of the Upanishads be known and realised even in a hundred years by those who pretend to be learned in the scriptures. The self- effulgence of the Atman, said to be sleeping in the heart- ether and the nerves, is not negated, because of the Atman's dissociation from them. Therefore, the Atman is distinct from them. Similarly, although the mind persists in dream, as possessed of the subtle impressions caused by avidya, kama, and karma (nescience, desire and action) yet, the most arrogant sophist cannot deny that in that state, the self-effulgence of the Atman which while remaining totally dissociated from the entire group of causes and effects, witnesses, through ignorance, the mental projections created by the past actions, as though different from Itself, for the witnessing Self then remains

totally distinct from the impressions that form the objects witnessed by It. Hence, it has been rightly said that when the senses merge in the mind which however, remains unabsorbed, the Atman as identified with the mind, sees dreams."

In deep-sleep, the rays of the mind together with the The mind is in sleep senses get collected in the heart. when it exists in the body pervading it as a whole in the form of general consciousness, as opposed to particularised All the consciousness in the waking and dreaming states.

doors of vision are closed by light. In this state, the Bliss that is of the nature of unobstructed Consciousness pervades the whole body in a general way. Both the gross quintuplicated elements and the subtle unquintuplicated elements of earth, water, fire, air and space, all the ten organs, along with their ten objects, the mind with the contents of thought, understanding and the content of understanding, egoism and the content of egoism, awareness and the content of awareness, radiance and its content and prana along with all that is held by it, become inactive. The cosmic prana, hiranyagarbha, is the string, as it were, in whom is strung everything, the entire range of body, senses and their objects. The realm of ignorance extends thus far only.

The substratum for all is the Atman who is the Seer, Feeler, Hearer, etc. The purusha that is the knower by nature, becomes wholly established in the Atman who is the immutable, Supreme Self free of all taints in the form of limitations.

This vidya is also given briefly in the first two mantras in the first section of the second chapter of the Mundaka- upanishad. These mantras say: "The Truth is the immutable purusha from whom originate different kinds of creatures even as from a blazing fire thousands of sparks akin to the fire fly off, and into whom they again merge. This purusha is transcendental, since He is formless. He is co-extensive with all that is external and internal, and there- fore, He is

without prana and mind. He is pure and superior to the superior immutable maya, the unmanifested which is His effect.

Fire remains unmanifested and it becomes manifested with some fuel or other. When there is large fuel, there is the blazing fire and from that sparks of varying nature which are also fire with fuel of smaller sizes, come out, exist for some time and then disappear. Both the blazing fire and the spark-fire which are manifested, and therefore, perceptible to the senses, merge in the general unmanifested fire when the fuel is burnt out. Even so, from that un- manifested, transcendental Brahman comes out the unmanifested isvara from whom issue forth hiranyagarbha, virat, the five elements, prana, the sense-organs, the mind and all the rest of this phenomenal cosmos. They remain visible for some time and again merge into that supreme Brahman.

He who meditates thus and realises the supreme Atman becomes omniscient and the all. Everything such as prana, the organs, the mind, the elements, the presiding deities and the rest, as though come out of this Atman, rest in this Atman, and dissolve in this Atman, even as the billows, breakers, waves, ripples, bubbles, foam, etc., appear on the surface of the ocean, rest there for a few moments and then dissolve in the ocean itself. The secret behind this phenomena is that the water of the ocean does not undergo the least change. It remains as water whether the ocean One who is calm or disturbed with billows and waves. practises this vidya realises this great secret that the supreme Atman remains as the Atman without the least change during the appearance and disappearance of the phenomena of waking, dreaming and deep sleep experiences.

The famous soul-stirring rudra-adhyaya mantras, also called sata-rudriya sometimes, occurring in the yajur-veda, describes the cosmic vision of the Seer of the mantras who has realised this great truth of this supreme purusha described in this vidya and other similar vidyas of the Upanishads. He has visualised Him as the great rudra, all-

pervading supreme Reality, the creator, sustainer and destroyer all at once, immanent in every atom of this so called creation. He is depicted in these most wonderful and holy mantras as the creator, protector and destroyer, the mortal and immortal, the real and the unreal, the good and the bad, the sinful and meritorious, being and doing, in short every blessed thing in this creation. Though we would like to cite the whole hymn here, the space does not allow it. Hence a few hymns alone are cited:

namo mantrine vanijaya kakshanam pateya namo

namo bhuvantaye varivaskritayaushadhinam pataye namo

nama ucchair-ghoshayakrantayate pattinam pataye namo

namah kritsnavitaya dhavate sattvanam pataye namah.

Prostrations again and again to Him who manifests Himself as a minister in a royal court, as merchant in business and as the ruler over all the vegetable kingdom; to the creator of the whole universe, the master of all wealth and the Lord of all medicines; to Him who thunders in battle and makes the enemy cry in fear and is the chief commander of all forces; to the all-pervading One, the fastness in action, the refuge of the devotees who make self-surrender.

O nama sahamanaya nivyadhina avyadhininam pataye namo

nama kakubhaya nishangine stenanam pataye namah

Prostrations again and again to the valient confronter of the enemies, the terrific destroyer of the opposing forces and the protector of Dharma pressing from all sides; to the great Lord seated on the back of the bull, armed with the sword, the chief of thieves.

namo nishangina ishudhimate taskaranam pataye namo

namo vanchate parivanchate sthayunam pataye namo

namo nicherave paricharayaranyanam pataye namah.

Prostrations again and again to the chief of robbers, to Him who is armed with quiver and arrows, to the deceiving, the tricky, and elusive lord of rogues and plunderers to the ever-cunning leader of the thieves lurking at home and those wandering in the streets and also in the forests.

Namah pa'msavyaya cha rajsyaya cha namah

sushkaya cha haritaya cha namo lopyaya cha

ulapyaya cha nama urvyaya cha surmyaya cha

Prostrations again and again to Him who is in the atoms and in the dust, to Him who is in the dry and in the green, to Him who is in the difficult terrains, in the green grass, to Him who is in the earth and in the rivers with mighty waves.

18. PRANAVA (OMKARA)-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE PRANAVA-OM)

Meditation on Brahman through pranava-omkara, om, occurs in more than one Upanishad. om as a syllable or sound is insentient in itself and cannot, therefore, be conscious of the worship offered to it. Still, as in the case of worship offered to an idol, it is isvara who in all cases takes note of the act and dispenses the fruit thereof-says Sri Anandagiri, the author of the gloss on Sankaracharya's commentaries.

In the fifth chapter of the Prasna-upanishad sage Pippalada instructs Satyakama on this omkara-vidya in reply to the latter's question: "O Venerable Sir, which world is attained by one who intently meditates on om continuously till death?" om is both the inferior, conditioned, saguna- brahman, hiranyagarbha as well as the superior, unconditioned Brahman, the Absolute. The meditator attains either, according to his meditation, for the inviolable law is in whatever form or condition one meditates, one becomes that. The corollary of this law is that one's present condition of samsara is the result of one's erroneous meditation, entertaining continuously for lives together, the mistaken notion that one is a samsarin, an ignorant man with a body-mind complex different from and independent of the world and God. It also follows that the remedy to get out of this samsara is right thinking which is termed upasana, devout meditation on the identity of oneself with Brahman, the All. This Upanishad, however, gives meditations on parts of the sound om-the syllable a, and then the syllables a and u and then on the a, u and m, om. The first meditation is on virat, the waking world, the result of which is identifi- cation with virat. The second one is a meditation on hiranya- garbha, on the whole world conceived as an idea projected by the mind as in a dream, which results in the attainment of saguna-brahman and krama-mukti. One who meditates on the complete 'om', all-comprehensive including all the three states of waking, dream and deep-sleep, attains the

Supreme purusha who is described as parat-param, higher than the high, i.e., superior even to the virat and hiranya- garbha.

The Mundakopanishad mantra II-2-iv gives a meditation on om with the help of the analogy of a man hitting a target by an arrow sent from a bow. om is the bow, the individual Soul is the arrow, Brahman is the target which is to be hit by an unerring man of self-control who should become one with it, like the arrow becoming one with the target. Just as the bow is the cause of the arrow's hitting and getting stuck up in the target, om is the cause for the individual Soul to realise its eternal oneness with Brahman, for through meditation on om one attains this Goal. mantra JI-2-vi also prescribes meditation on the Self with the help of om, by those who wish to go beyond the darkness of ignorance. Here, the analogy given to help meditation is that of the spokes and hub in a wheel. Just as the spokes are fixed on the hub of a chariot wheel, all the nerves that spread over the whole body are fixed in the heart. One should meditate thus with the help of om.

The Taittiriya-upanishad in chapter I-section 8 says: "om iti brahma, om-iti-idam sarvam-om is Brahman, om is all this". One should meditate that om is Brahman which is all this. Even as all leaves are fast bound in their stalk, all speech is fast bound in the syllable om. Even as all parts of a leaf are permeated by the veins or ribs, so are all worlds permeated by om (chh. up. II-23-iii). In the case of leaves, though these veins spread over the whole leaf forming a close knit net-work, as it were, still there is space in the leaves where the veins are not present. But in the world, the pervasion of om is in such a manner that there is no space left unpervaded by it. om is the matrix, as it were, of all sounds, and all names and forms constituting the world, have come out of it. And Brahman is the ultimate substance which has assumed the form of all this. Therefore, om is to be meditated as Brahman. The Yoga- eutras also say that om is the designation of Brahman-tasya vachakah pranavah (I-27). To help the mind to meditate on Brahman through om, the Upanishad extols om

by giving a few instances of its use in rituals and sacri- fices. om is used as a word of compliance. All start reciting Vedas with the chanting of om. All samans are sung with om. Prayers are chanted with om som. It is used, as a word of acceptance by the adhvaryu priest. The brahma priest uses om as a word of assent. The permission to pour oblations in the sacred fire in all sacrifices, is given through this mono-syllable word om. All sacred and holy speeches and actions are started with the chanting of om and con- cluded with the chanting again of om. In short, there is no religious or spiritual act, whether mental, oral or physical, where om is not connected in some manner or other.

The Svetasvatara-upanishad gives this meditation in three verses, I-14 to 16. The analgoy used to instruct the meditation is that of the two pieces of wood (arani) used to kindle the sacrificial fire by churning them, placing one over the other. Making ones own body the lower arani and pranava the upper one, one should practise meditation which is compared to the churning process. The Upanishad gives in this connection, three more analogies to explain how the Atman-Brahman is immanent in every atom of this creation. The first one is that of the oil in sesame seeds. It shows that just as oil pervades the whole of the seed and remains hidden and unseen, but becomes visible and tangible when the seeds are crushed, even so, the Atman pervades all this -all objects, all speech, all thought and all that evades speech and thought and remains hidden to the senses and the mind, but manifests Itself through meditation. The second analogy of butter in curds tries to illustrate the impersonal and unconditioned, as well as the personal and conditioned nature of the Supreme. Butter though present in curd and milk, remains one with them, but becomes separated from them and assumes a separate name and form as butter when churned. Similarly, the Atman remaining one with the world in Its impersonal and un- conditioned nature, still manifests Itself as a personal God through devoted meditation. The analogy of water in under- ground springs, cited as the third analogy, shows that

even as a man digging the ground with great effort to find water, is relieved of his trouble when he finds water, the seeker who practises meditation is freed of all worldly pain and suffering by realising his own Atman thro- ugh meditation.

The Kathopanishad makes mention of this meditation in verses xvi and xvii of section 2 of first chapter. It says that this aksharam, syllable om, indeed is the saguna-brahman, hiranyagarbha and it is indeed the Supreme Brahman. This medium for meditation is the best among all mediums used in meditation. This is the highest and most praiseworthy, because it relates to both the immanent and the transcen- dental. This meditation is given by the Lord of Death to the young Nachiketas who wanted to know what happens after the final death' of the universe. (For more details, please see nachiketa-vidya).

This meditation on om as given in the Mandukya-upanishad, is dealt with as a separate vidya under the title mandukya-vidya.

Through this meditation, the intellect is freed of in- dividuality and becomes one with the Atman-Brahman. Truthfulness (satya), penance in the form of meditation (tapas) and knowledge of the Self (atma-vidya) are the preconditions laid down by the Upanishad for attaining the Goal which is none other than one's own Self, the all-pervading Brahman. Attainment of this knowledge of the Self comes under what is known in the scriptures as prapta- praptavyam-attainment of that which remains already attained always. In this world, man desires to possess objects which he likes but which are not in his possession, and he puts forth efforts and attains them. This kind of attaining objects which one does not possess previously, comes under what is called in sanskrit aprapta-praptavyam. But the Self does not come under this category. It is already with the seeker, nay, the seeker himself. Yet he is ignrant of Its presence. It is somewhat similar to getting back the lost necklace in the neck in that interesting incident in which a woman wearing a costly necklace, after a bath in the sea, got on the shore and found to her great sorrow that her necklace was missing. She

concluded that it had been washed away by the waves and started wailing. Someone standing nearby asked her the reason for her grief. She said her gold necklace had been lost in the sea. That man could see the necklace sticking on to her neck and hanging on her back. He told her that the necklace had not been lost in the sea, and asked her to feel round her neck. She did so and found the necklace and exclaimed: "O, I have got back my necklace". Really speaking, she did not get back the neck- lace, because she did not lose it. It was on her neck all the while. The mistake committed was that she, through ignorance of the truth, wrongly thought that it was lost, and hence, made the statement that she got it back. In this case, it is getting what is already got, prapta-praptavyam. Similar is the case with the attainment of the Atman through meditation. The Atman always remains attained. Due to ignorance, one thinks that oneself is different from It and starts searching for It outside. Through knowledge and meditation, one's ignorance is destroyed and the ever- effulgent Atman reveals Itself, as it were.

Going deeper, the question arises as to whether the ignorance is destroyed. Does the ignorance exist? If it exists, is it real or unreal? If it is real, then it could not be destroyed. If it is unreal, then it is non-existent and the question of destruction cannot arise. Thus the state-ment that the ignorance is destroyed is on the same footing as the other statement, viz., the Atman is attained. in the case of the Atman, it is attainment of the already attained, in the case of ignorance, it is the destruction of a non-existent entity. In the rope-snake analogy, when we know the truth of the rope, we say that the snake is gone. Does the snake really go? No, because there was no snake to go anywhere. Similar is the case with the destruction of the ignorance. Through the knowledge of the Truth, the unreal or non-existent ignorance is, as it were, destroyed. This is the result of meditation.

This meditation on the pranava or om results in either identification with hiranyagarbha or the Absolute Itself, according to the nature of one's meditation.

"omkaram bindu samyuktam

nityam dhyayanti yoginah,

kamadam mokshadam chaiva

omkaraya namo-namah.

Yogins always meditate on om with bindu. To that om which fulfils all desires and bestows liberation, prostrations again and again."

19. SHODASAKALA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE ENTITY WITH SIXTEEN LIMBS)

Sage Pippalada instructed this vidya to one of his disciples by name Sukesa, son of sage Bharadvaja. This comes in chapter VI of the Prasna-upanishad which is in the form of questions and answers, the questions by six persons including Sukesa and the answers by sage Pippalada. Acharya Sankara says in his commentary on this Upanishad that these six persons were ever devoted to the saguna-brahman (Brahman with name and form) mistaking It for the Supreme Brahman, that they were engaged in the practices leading to the attainment of the former, and that they were intent on the search for the latter. This vidya is an elaborate reiteration of the higher knowledge dealt with briefly in the Mundakopanishad mantras beginning with: "From Him originate, the vital force, as well as the mind, all the senses, space, air, fire, water and earth that supports everything" (II-1-iii). This vidya, coming as it does as the answer to the sixth and the last question, forms the apex, as it were, in the ascent of consciousness, starting from the base of ritualistic Karmas with and without meditation, passing on through the greatness of prana, its origin, lodgment and fivefold overlordship, then the deity in whom all the organs merge in deep-sleep and the meditation on om, converges in the purusha of sixteen kalas-limbs or digits.

The question of Sukesa is introduced through an incident in which the prince of Kosala by name Hiranyanabha approached Sukesa considering him as a knower of Brah- man, and put the question about the knowledge of the purusha possessed of sixteen kalas. As Sukesa did not have this knowledge, the prince had to return disappointed. And Sukesa on his part felt grieved about his ignorance and approached Pippalada and prayed to be enlightened about that purusha of sixteen kalas.

Sage Pippalada says: "O somya (fair boy) know that purusha is here itself inside the body, in whom originate the sixteen kalas. He deliberated and created prana (hiranyagarbha) and then from prana He created faith (sraddha), space, air, fire, water, earth, organs, mind, food, vigour, self-control, mantras, rites, worlds, and name. These sixteen entities starting from prana and ending with name are said to be the sixteen limbs of the purusha. And the purusha is said to be the purusha of sixteen limbs." The Upanishad, continuing the instructions, says that just as rivers have the ocean as their goal and they get absorbed after reaching it, even so, all the sixteen limbs which are projected by the purusha, have purusha as their goal and all of them get absorbed in Him in the end. Just as different rivers lose their separate names and forms when they join the ocean and are called ocean alone, when all names and forms of these sixteen limbs get merged in the purusha and lose their distinct and separate existence, they are simply called purusha. All these limbs depend on the purusha for their existence, even as the spokes in a chariot wheel depend on the nave of the chariot to which they are fixed.

The creation of the prana and the rest is not to be understood as bringing into existence something outside the creator, the purusha. It is not like a carpenter creating a cot which is outside him. The carpenter stands separate from the cot which he creates. The purusha's creation of these sixteen limbs which constitute the phenomenal universe is unique in nature, since here the purusha, the creator and the universe, the created together with the act of creation are non-different. The universe is not outside the purusha. It has no existence apart from Him. It is like the creation of the dream world which has no existence before going to sleep and after waking. It was only an appearance projected by the 'T', the Consciousness. Being an appearance only, it has no real existence. It is non- different from Consciousness. It cannot exist without Consciousness. When I wake up the whole of the dream world becomes non-different from the 'T'

which projected it. Did the dream world really exist at the time of witnessing the dream? It did not. Exactly similar is the case of the world of waking state also. The phenomenon of this world, with the prana and the rest did not really exist either in the past, nor does it exist in the present, nor will it exist in future, different from the Consciousness.

The first manifestation itself as prana is due to the unreal ignorance, also called maya in the scriptures. pruna is not really prana, but only the purusha with the name prana superimposed on Him. If a barren woman dreams one day that she has given birth to a beautiful baby, what happens when she wakes up? No one calls her a mother. The baby is no more. Did it die? You cannot say 'no', for it is seen no more. You cannot also say it died. This answer is not correct, because it was not born at all. Only that which is born can die. The truth in this case is that there is neither birth nor death of the baby to that barren woman, although she witnessed the birth of a baby and its existence, during the dream. Similar is the case with the other remaining fifteen limbs of the purusha referred to in this meditation.

A similar meditation on the purusha of sixteen limbs occurs in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad I-5-xiv and xv. The lunar days which are fifteen in number, which are changing, are to be meditated as the fifteen limbs of prajapati and the constant one, the moon on the new-moon night and the full- moon night which is constant, as the sixteenth digit. prajapati with the sixteen digits is the man who knows this, who meditates thus; for wealth constitutes his fifteen digits and the body the sixteenth. Just as the moon waxes and wanes in the bright and dark fortnights, and remains constant on the new moon and full-moon night, the wealth increases and decreases and the body remains unchanged. The body is like the nave and the wealth is like the felloe. The fifteen digits are temporal and relative while the sixteenth is transcendent, represented by the invisible conjunction between the new moon and the next day and that between the full-

moon and the succeeding day. The mind which is influenced by the moon attains the sixteenth digit on the new moon and full-moon nights and hence, their importance and significance to spiritual sadhakas.

The Chhandogya-upanishad also refers to the sixteen digits in man in mantra VI-7-vi.

In such meditations one should meditate 'I am nothing', the 'I' constituted of his body-mind complex, because it is a an unreal appearance, as that in dream. superimposition, The next step is to meditate "everything is I alone". Here the 'I' is the pure Consciousness. Was not everything in the dream, the manifestation of the 'T', the pure conscious- ness? Yes. Even so is the case of everything in the waking state also. This is not the final goal which is the essential nature of the 'T'. Because both these, 'I am nothing' and 'everything is I alone', depend on and are in relation to the phenomenal world which is really non-existent apart from Consciousness. When both the concepts are transcended, the 'I' is in its pristine purity. The 'T' is what It really is. This 'I' is here and now. What prevents its realisation is the false appearance of the world of subject and object, its presence as well as its absence, presence in the waking and dream states and absence in the deep-sleep state.

The fruit of this vidya is immortality. One who meditates on the sixteen digits becomes freed from them. Death no more afflicts such a meditator. He realises that there is nothing to know beyond this purusha who is Himself, the Self in all, the Self which alone is. He ferries across the ocean of samsara, the unreal nescience, to the other shore of Infinity and Immortality. All distinctions and separate- ness vanish as though by magic. They do not really vanish, as they did not really exist before. The apparent variety in the form of this phenomenal universe is only the appearance of the Supreme purusha, and therefore, non-different from Him. The knowledge that dawns through this meditation results in the destruction of the unreal prana

and the remaining fifteen limbs which are the projections of purusha because of avidya, kama and karma-nescience, desire and action. While the creation of the prana and the rest is real 'death', their merger in purusha results in freedom from death, which is Immortality and Eternal Life.

SECTION-V

MUNDAKA-UPANISHAD

20. APARA-VIDYA-2

(MEDITATION ON THE LOWER BRAHMAN-2)

The Mundakopanishad starts with the question of Saunaka well known in those ancient times as an ideal householder, to sage Angiras: "O Lord, what is that which being known, all this becomes known?" The sage's reply begins thus: "dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yad-brahma- vido vadanti, para chaiva'para cha-There are two kinds of vidyas, knowledge to be acquired, the higher and the lower. This is what the knowers of Brahman declare (I-1-iv)." Of these, the lower knowledge comprises of all the four vedas, the science of pronunciation, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, metre, astrology and all other sciences and arts and the higher knowledge is that by which the Immutable, the Undecaying is realised.

The Vedas especially the Upanishads which generally form the concluding portions of the several sections of the Vedas are the source of highest knowledge. If Vedas are included under the lower knowledge, what then is the source of higher knowledge? To this doubt, it is answered that the higher knowledge, the knowledge of the Absolute, the Immutable, is Revealed Knowledge, and not merely the assemblage of words contained in the books which go by the name of Vedas including the Upanishads. Generally, what people understand by 'Vedas' and 'Upanishads' is the books. Sage Angiras says that the mastery of these books, by committing them to memory, and even by possessing the capacity to explain their literal and grammatical meanings, the realisation of the Immutable is not possible. This Upanishad makes this point clear in its mantra III-2-iii, where it says: "This Atman is not attained through mere study of scriptures, nor through intellectual understanding nor through much hearing of instructions from others". Another scripture says: "na vedam veda ity-ahur-vede vedo na vid- yate, paratma vedyate yena sa vedo-veda uchyate the Veda is not to be called Veda, for there is no Veda in Veda; that is truely the Veda by which the Supreme Atman is known".

The lower knowledge cannot be completely dispensed with, for it is only through it that one has to attain the higher knowledge. Both have been handed down to us thro- ugh guru parampara, traditional line of teachers, from the beginning of creation. This Upanishad gives their names starting right from the Creator Brahma, the first-born, who He imparted this knowledge to his eldest son, Atharva. imparted it to Angir in days of yore. Angir passed it on to Satyavaha who in his turn is said to have transmitted it to Angiras, who is the teacher in this Upanishad.

All karmas performed whether combined with meditations or not, with desire to enjoy happiness in any form in this world or in higher worlds, comes under the lower know- ledge. They come under the realm of ignorance. The result of karma is itself called loka, world, that which is seen or experienced. All that is transcient. Acharya Sankara puts the whole thing in a nutshell and says: "yat drisyam tat- nasyam- all that is perceivable is perishable". So all the worlds attained as results of karmas, are liable to destruction, in the sense that when the merits of the karmas per- formed are exhausted, one has to leave off those higher worlds and be born again here in this world. There are in- numerable difficulties in performing karmas to their perfection fulfilling all the conditions prescribed in the scriptures. When karmas are not done in the manner in which they ought to be done and are defective, the performer not only loses their result in the form of attainment of higher realms of enjoyment, but earns demerit or sin which causes suffering either in this world or in the next or both. Only the deluded fools, says the Upanishad, believing the ritualistic karmas prescribed in the scriptures, perform them with the hope of enjoyment here and hereafter.

There are some others, the vanaprasthis, forest dwellers (not sannyasins) and the learned householders who have their senses under control, who practice meditation over and above the duties pertaining to their position in life. They, after death, go by the

'northern path' and then reach brahma-loka, the world of hiranyagarbha. Compared to the Ultimate goal which is nothing less than the supreme Brah- man, this attainment of the world of hiranyagarbha is said to be lower or inferior as it is also the result of lower know- ledge. The Upanishad wants the seekers not to be satisfied even with the world of hiranyagarbha, but to transcend that also and become one with that Imperishable, non-dual Brahman.

Once there was a pious couple living in a small village who had no issues. The woman was declared barren. Naturally she was very unhappy and lead a miserable life. She prayed to all the gods, observed all kinds of fasts, chanted many mantras, all to no effect. A little away from the village there was a great devotee. People said that every day he met God and talked to him. This woman started visiting him with offerings such as fruits, sweets, etc. This continued for days, weeks and months. One day the devotee asked her the purpose of her daily visit. Then she told him of her pitiable condition. She prayed to him to consult God and know whether she could get issues in this life. The devotee promised to do it. That night as usual he was in meditation and when God appeared, he put him the question whether the woman was to get issues or not. God told him that she had no chance of getting even a single child in that birth. Next day, when the woman as usual came to the devotee, he promptly communicated to her what God had told him the previous day. The last hope she had also left her. She became almost mad with grief over her plight and decided to commit suicide by drowning herself in the nearby river. Like a possessed woman she ran towards the river. She reached the bank. Suddenly she heard a sweet voice calling her by her name. She turned back and saw a half-naked Sadhu (monk) with his body covered by dust, his dishevelled hair almost covering his face. But his voice was so sweet that it attracted her attention inspite of his almost fearful physical appearance.

The Sadhu asked her why she was rushing towards the river in so much haste. She did not reply. Her thoughts were evidently that the Sadhu could not help her in any way, for God himself had already decided her fate. Being persuaded by the Sadhu, she told him of all that had happened-how she had been declared a barren woman for all her life even by God himself. The Sadhu with a calm and serene face said in soothing but stern voice. O Mother, who said you are a barren woman? I say that you will have not one but three children. I am speaking the truth. Be happy. Go home and await the birth of the children". These words like nectar to a dying man, enlivened her. They had a magical effect on her. She became utterly peaceful, calm and composed in mind and returned home. A son was born within one year, followed by a daughter and another son in the next two years. She wanted to meet the Sadhu with her children to express her feelings of gratitude, but could not meet him anywhere inspite of a long search. Then she remembered the devotee. And in all humility she took the three children, with large offerings and went to the devotee and prostrated before him. The devotee saw the woman with a happy and smiling face with the three kids all healthy, beautiful and loving. The devotee enquired: "Whose are these children?" The woman with all humility and respect replied: "They are yours, O great devotee; by your grace I have been blessed with these three, two boys and one girl". The devotee could not believe his eyes. He thought: "how could this happen against the prediction of God himself? He has cheated me. Any how, when I meet Him this evening, I will take Him to task for having placed me in an embarassing situation. My name and fame all gone. Who will believe my words henceforward!" In the evening as usual he met his God. The devotee was in an angry mood. He addressed the God: "O God, you have deceived me. From now onwards who will believe me? Every one will say, I am a cheat, I am not really meeting and talking to you". God patiently heard these remarks and replied "O my devotee, what I told you was the truth. I did not tell you a lie. That woman is not destined to have children in

this birth. But she happened to meet that Sadhu who is one with the Infinite whose words could not become false. You are running after me, while I am running after Him." The scriptures say that all Gods worship the holy feet of that rare Soul whose intellect has merged into that eternal ocean of Bliss.

21. PARA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE TRANSCENDENTAL BRAHMAN)

The meditation on the transcendental Brahman dealt with under the title para-vidya here, is given in the Mundako- panishad. Though the instructions thereof are spread out through-out the whole Upanishad in all the six sections, here we are taking only a few mantras for meditation.

This para-vidya practised by a qualified seeker, takes him to the Immutable referred to as akshara in mantra I-i-5. This supreme, transcendental immutable Brahman, though existing everywhere, cannot be perceived or grasped by the senses or the mind. It is without any connection with any- thing whatsoever, without attributes of any kind, without organs such as eyes, ears and the rest. It is eternal, multi-formed, all-pervasive, extremely subtle, undiminishing and is the source of all, all that exists and does not exist. As a spider projects from and withdraws into itself the threads, as on the earth grow herbs and trees without any effort, and as from the sentient man issues out hair and nails which are non-sentient, even so, from this Immutable Brahman, the whole universe of sentient and non-sentient beings emerge out, appear to exist for some time and merge back into It, all without any effort. The first such emergence is isvara the Unmanifested, from whom emerges hiranyagarbha, the cosmic prana, mind and intellect, then the virat purusha, the cosmic Person, then the elements, then the worlds, then the karmas and their fruits. This Supreme, the Absolute is omniscient in general and also in particular. He does not put forth the least effort in this cosmic play of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. He is pure Know- ledge (I-i-6 to 9).

Though this great immutable Brahman is nameless and formless, He can be known through meditation on the heart as having Him, the self-effulgent, well seated and well- known as the 'I' in all. In Him are fixed,

like the spokes in the nave of a chariot wheel, all that moves and does not move, all that breathes and does not breath, all that winks and does not wink. He comprises in Himself the gross and the subtle and also the causal worlds. He is beyond the ordinary knowledge of the individual intellect. He is the highest, the Supreme, the Absolute. the Absolute. He is to be meditated as non-different from prana, speech, mind and the rest, as they are only His expressions. Perception of the presence of objects and concepts in the waking and dreaming states, and their non-perception in the deep sleep state, are indications which help to know and realise this supreme Being. One should penetrate through the objects seen and also their absence, the knowing and un-knowing, all thoughts and their absence, to know the truth of the Supreme Absolute. The Upanishad gives the analogy of an arrow released from a bow getting fixed and becoming one with the target. Here, the Atman is compared to the arrow, pranava or om to the bow, purification of the mind through meditation to the sharpening of the arrow, Brahman to the target, withdrawal of the senses and mind from the different objects to the drawing of the string of the bow, and the fixing of the mind of the the aspirant on Brahman to the fixing of the whole attention of the archer on the target such as a deer or some such animal. Thus Brahman should be 'shot at' by the unerring sadhaka, and getting fixed in It, he should remain one with It. He should not waste his time by talking too much about things other than Brahman. In other words, he should divinise all his thought, speech and action. Thus meditation on Brahman with the help of pranava or om which is like a bridge, helps the aspirant to cross over this transmigratory existence.

What is the result of this meditation? bhidyate hridaya granthih, chhidyante sarva-samsayah, kshiyante cha'sya kar- muni tasmin drishte para'vare-All the knots of the heart are broken, all doubts are cleared, all karmas are dissipated, when the meditator realises that he is Brahman, both the transcendental and immanent. He directly

experiences with- out the intervention of the mind and organs, that his purified intellect is the place for Its realisation, and that everything else here is illumined by the consciousness of Brahman. Brahman is free from any taint. He is without parts, is the Light of all lights and is not revealed by any other light as He is ever self-revealed. The meditator on Brahman experiences that all that is in front is He alone, all that is on the right as well as the left, above and below-all is He Himself. He realises the great truth that the world is nothing but Brahman, the Absolute-Brahmaiva-idam visvam-idam vari- shtham.

What actually happens in the meditator finally, is difficult of communication in words. Scriptures, therefore, give a number of analogies through which one can have an intellectual peep into that state. But one has to experience It oneself to clear all doubts. One such analogy is the story of the tenth man. Once ten persons were on this side of the Ganga and wanted to cross the river and go to the other side. There was no boat. Therefore, they decided to swim across the river. All jumped into the river and reached the other side safely. Now a doubt arose in one of them that some one among them might have been lost in the river. This doubt suddenly gave rise to fear which in its turn caused confusion in his mind. To verify, he started count- ing. He counted all the nine. Because of his confused mind, he forgot to count or rather to include himself in the counting. This omission led him to confirm his doubt about the loss of one person in the river. This confirmation of doubt gave rise to grief. The others who by hearing the news of the loss of one among them, were also alarmed and therefore confused. They also started counting to verify the conclusion of that man. They also committed the same mistake because of their muddled state of mind caused by the news of the death of one among themselves. All of them now in a state of excitement and grief, started wailing. They beat their breasts and cried. Some passerby saw this, so many persons crying and sobbing. He enquired the cause of their grief. They related the whole incident,

how they altogether ten in number crossed the river by swimming and how they have found out that one among them was washed away by the current. That man at a glance found that they were ten in number. Then he said to them: "O, my friends, the tenth man is not lost". This statement gave them some relief. But they had still the doubt, for all of them had counted and come to the conclusion about the loss of the tenth man. In order to clear their doubt, he asked them to count again. One amongst them started counting. He counted all the nine and stopped. Then the other man told him: "You are the tenth man". He was then convinced of the truth that none was lost and he him- self was the tenth man whom he thought was lost and for whom he was grieving. Similar is the case of man search- ing for his own Self whom he somehow thinks is not, be- cause It is not seen. He in this confused state of mind goes here and there, does all sorts of actions secular and spiritual to find his own Self. Through the instructions of the guru and through reflection and meditation, he realises that the Self whom he was searching for, is he himself, nay It is the Self in all, present everywhere, in every conceivable object. He realises his earlier foolishness which now vanishes immediately. He becomes wise. He realises that all along he has been the Self alone and was never otherwise.

Swami Vidyaranya in his Panchadasi expatiates on this (vide chapter 7 tripti-dipa) and states that there are seven stages in the process of attaining Knowledge. They are ajnana (ignorance), avarana (veil), vikshepa (distraction), paroksha-jnana (indirect knowledge), aparoksha-jnana (direct experience), sokamoksha (freedom from sorrow), and tripti (Self-fulfilment). The first three are the cause of bondage, and the latter three are stages in the liberation of the ego. Man never knows that there is the Self which is different from the body-mind personality. This is 'ignorance'. He feels that the Self does not exist as It is not perceivable by the senses. This is the 'veil'. He then feels that he is the doer and enjoyer, and therefore, suffers in the

world. This is 'distraction'. In the above funny story, the not find- ing the tenth person in the group, the consequent feeling that he is not there and not seen, and the subsequent grief re- present ignorance, the veil and distraction respectively. Just as the passerby instructs them that the tenth man exists, the guru instructs that the Self exists and the seeker gets the knowledge about the existence of the Self. This is indirect knowledge. Even as the passerby showed the tenth man that he himself was the tenth man, and that man realised the truth of his existence alive, the guru's instruction 'tat- tvam-asi-You are That' results in intense meditation and direct experience. In the story, the tenth man finally leaves off his grief and becomes happy and contented. Even so, the spiritual seeker, after direct realisation experiences self-fulfilment. He realises that whatever has to be done has been done, whatever has to be attained has been attained. This is suprme satisfaction. The number 'ten' in the analogy has some significance as it represents Infinity which the Self is. Numerical numbers are only up to 'nine' and what is beyond nine viz., ten, is regarded as beyond all numbers, i.e., Infinite.

This Para-Vidya, meditation on the Transcendental Brah- man has been expounded in many other scriptures also like the Chhandogya Upanishad, the Taittiriya Upanishad the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Srimat Bhagavatam, the Nasa- diya Sukta, etc. In the Chhandogya Upanishad Sage Uddalaka instructing his son Svetaketu says: "sadeva saumya idam agra asid ekameva-advitiyam-O Dear one, in the beginning the Existence-Absolute which is one and non-dual alone was (VI-ii-1)". When the Taittiriya Upanishad wants to express the same Truth it says: asad va idamagra asid-In the beginning this was Non-existence alone. The Maitreyi Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad contain- ing the immortal instructions of Sage Yajnavalkya to his wife Maitreyi, says that not only in the beginning before creation, but after dissolution and also during the existence of the created world, the Absolute alone is. This is illustrated with a number

of analogies (II-iv-7 to 11). The same Truth is revealed in the Srimat Bhagavatam when the Supreme Lord says to Brahma, the god of creation: "ahamevasame- vagre nanyad yat sadasat param; paschad-aham yadetascha yoavasishyata so'smyaham-I, the Absolute alone was in the beginning, nothing else was, neither existence nor non-exist- ence; and after creation, I the Absolute alone continues as such; and I, the Absolute alone will be after dissolution (II-ix-32). Almost in the same strain, this great Truth is revealed in the famous Nasadiya Sukta which says: "Nasad- asit no-sad-asit tadanim nasid-rajo no vyoma paroyat-Then, before creation there was neither being or non- being, neither the space physical nor the Supreme Space (mantra 1). There are many other Scriptures also revealing this Truth of the Absolute which exists before the so-called creation and continues to be the same during the apparent existence of the world and after the so-called dissolution.

A logical mind may raise the question: "Who was there to see the condition before creation? The great sages who have made these statements must have come only after creation. There could have been none before creation. If so, how these statements are made about the Absolute and how one can verify its truth? From whom can one know whether what they have stated is true?" sraddha -- unshakable faith or conviction in the scriptures is a must for the seekers. Such seekers with sraddha can resolve these doubts by deep reflection on the nature of one's own experiences in the three states of deep sleep, dream and waking. When one's mind is purified through spiritual Sadhana like japa, devoted worship of God, study of scriptures and the like, that mind naturally engages itself in contemplation and meditation on the statements of the scriptures like the ones cited above. The result is the dawn of the Truth which burns away all doubts caused by nescience, like a single lighted match stick burns a heap of cotton. This is Liberation from all kinds of mental tension and turmoil and the direct experience of Peace and Bliss in this

very life. Such a blessed soul does not perceive anything separate from the Absolute-na-anyat pasyati, na-anyat srinoti, na-anyat vijanati (ch. up. VII-xxiv-1). When he perceives, he perceives nothing other to the Absolute. So he perceives and perceives not. Perception and non-perception makes no difference to that soul. This is Divine perception. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad when it describes the state of such a soul says: "yadvai tanna pasyati pasyan-vai tanna pasyati-Verily the Self does not perceive anything; even while It is perceiving It does not perceive."

22. VIRAT-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE LORD IN THE FORM OF THE MANIFESTED MACROCOSM)

Instructions on this meditation on virat-the Supreme in the form of this universe-is contained in the Mundaka Upanishad verses iv to x of section 1 of chapter II. This follows immediately after the exposition on the transcendental Brahman contained in verses ii and iii of the same section.

According to Sri Sankaracharya, the Upanishad in these seven verses presents in detail, what it has briefly stated in the preceding two verses about the transcendental Brah-man. A brief statement first, followed by a descriptive comment in the Upanishad, is to help easy comprehension, even as an aphorism is easier to understand when it is ex- plained through a commentary. Generally, in Vedantic texts virat is stated to take birth from hiranyagarbha who in his turn is born from isvara, the unmanifest manifestation of the transcendental Brahman. Thus virat seems to be sep- arated from the Supreme by the two intervening principles, viz., hiranyagarbha and isvara. But really this virat is not so far away from the Supreme Brahman, for He is an ex- pression of the transcendental Supreme itself, even as the other two are. The meditation on the virat represented as the totality of all the universes put together is in a sense, easier to practise, than the meditation on the Absolute. This meditation on the virat finally results in the attainment of the supreme transcendental Brahman Itself. In all the three levels of consciousness, that of isvara, hiranyagarbha and virat, there is no samsara, as the very first differentiation as subject and object has not yet manifested.

This virat is to be meditated as the indwelling Self in all- sarvabhuta'ntaratma-having the heaven for His head, the sun and moon for His two eyes, the directions for His ears, the revealed Vedas for His speech, air for His heart and from whose two feet emerged the

earth. He is also called vishnu, the all-pervading, in devotional scriptures. This Self in all beings who at the same time is the all-pervasive vishnu or virat, is the real seer, hearer, toucher, taster, smeller, thinker and knower and the real principle or the essence of all the organs, in all beings. Thus should one meditate.

Some more help is given to the aspirant in his meditation. From Him emanate celestial forces and also the thinking faculty symbolised by the moon which is the presiding deity of the mind. From the moon (the mind) emerges herbs and corns eaten by man which become the seed for the child. The parents are two forces present in all beings. The Vedas, all knowledge, the process of initiation, the sacrifices like asvamedha and gomedha wherein animals are sacrificed as well as those like agnihotra in which there is no animal sacrifice, all offerings and gifts, the time factor, the sacrificer, all the worlds which are the results of sacrifices, all the creatures, the higher worlds of gods attained by them who go, after death, through the 'northern path' and the lower worlds reached by those who proceed by the 'southern path' all these have emerged from Him alone. Similarly, the gods in various groups numbering from three thousand three hundred and six to one referred to in the hymns known as nivid, men, beasts (both the domestic and the wild), birds, all the pranas, all grains, austerity, faith, truth, continence and duty have emerged from Him only. Continuing further, the Upanishad enumerates five groups of seven entities (i) the seven pranas, (ii) the seven sense-organs, (iii) the seven flames or lights that illumine the objects of the seven senses (iv) the seven kinds of fuel viz., the sense objects and (v) the seven oblations in the form of perception by the seven senses-which also have emanated from Him. All the oceans, all the mountains, all the rivers, all the corns and their juice also have emerged from Him alone. From the virat-purusha have emerged all that exists here. Thus should one meditate.

What is the nature of all this created by Him? The reply is very clearly given in the opening mantras of the Paingala Upanishad. Sage

Yajnavalkya says to Paingala: In the begnning sat alone was and That was eternal, free, changeless, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute, the tran- scendental Whole, the one and non-dual Brahman. From It the mulaprakriti containing the three gunas in equilibrium, which cannot be said to be either existent or non-existent and therefore beyond expression (anirvachaniyam), ema- nated. How? Its emergence is like that of mirage-water from the desert in the midday sun, silver from nacre again in bright sun light, ghost from a post in dim moon light, colour from a crystal when some coloured object is near it, snake from a rope at dusk, etc. When the mulaprakriti, the supposed cause of the whole universe, is itself thus unreal and an appearance which has no independent existence from the original sat, there need not be any doubt about the un- real and non-existent nature of the universe which is said to have emanated from mula- prakriti. Just as in the examples cited, the substratum such as the desert, nacre, post, crystal, rope, etc., alone are real, even so the sat from which the mula-prakriti has emerged, alone is real. And this sat alone is the virat, since the former pervades the latter like the warp and woof in a cloth.

Therefore, one should meditate that the virat-purusha alone who is non-different from the sat, is all this comprising the whole cosmos. Arjuna had this vision of the virat- purusha, described in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad- gita. Mother Yasoda had this virat-darsan when the baby Krishna opened his mouth to show that he had not eaten mud as complained by his playmates. Dhritarashtra, in the Assembly of the Kauravas also had this vision when Krishna who had gone as the ambassador of the Pandavas, revealed His virat form to show that He cannot be bound and jailed as Duryodhana wanted to do. Similarly, Uddhava and a few others had the darsan of the virat form of Lord Krishna. He who meditates on the virat, the cosmic form of the Supreme, also attains this magnificent vision. He identifies

himself with the universal Consciousness. He becomes the all, and therefore, He is said to possess the all or attain the all.

It is said that till recently, there was a custom in Nepal where once in a year, the king used to stock all materials such as blankets, clothes, water pots, deer-skin, rudraksha malas, etc., articles of use for monks and devotees who used to go on pilgrimage to worship Lord Siva, Pasupatinath as He is named, the Lord of the lords of all beings. He used to give these articles as gifts to the pilgrims. There was only one restriction. While all were free to select any article, they could not select more than one. The king used to sit in a big royal throne at the door and bow down to each devotee as he went out with the article chosen by him. He considered them as the very embodiment of his tutelary deity, Lord Siva. One day, an old monk entered the hall, went round and round seeing all the articles and came back with- out selecting any article. The king saw him and queried: "O Revered monk, why have you not chosen anything?" The monk asked the king: "Can I select anything that I want?" "Yes" said the king, "This is the custom here. Take the one which you like most and which you are in need of." The wise monk then, to the astonishment of all crowded there, embraced the king and said: "I have selected this". The king was surprised. None had selected him before. How can anyone select the king as an object of possession? He wanted an explanation from the monk for his strange action. Then the monk explained: "O revered king, I can select only one thing. And by selecting you who is the owner of all the articles in the hall, I have now become the owner of all the articles. Who will select one article which deprives him of all the remaining articles?" Similar is the result of meditating on the virat-purusha. When, through meditation one becomes identified with Him who is all the worlds, he be- comes possessed of all the worlds by realising his identity with the all.

In this context, a short conversation that took place between a Master and a senior disciple of his, comes to the mind, which throws some

light on the subject under dis- cussion, viz., the result of meditation on the virat, saguna- brahman. This disciple well advanced in age in his present physical body, was living under the protecting care and in the immediate presence of the Master for a pretty long period. He is not only learned in all the scriptures but also has imbibed the spiritual import behind them with the help of the Master.

Disciple: O revered Master, may I ask a question?

Master: Very well, you can ask.

D: My mind now and then tells that by your grace I have understood the Truth. The next moment the same mind is reminded of your instruction that the Truth can never be understood. For It can never become an object of under- standing. Then how the thought that 'I have understood the Truth' arises in my mind?

M: Yes, I understand your position. Now tell me what is the Truth which you think you have understood.

D: The Truth, the Absolute, indicated by the word 'Atman- Brahman' alone is. All the world is that alone.

M: There you see a cow standing. Here, near us is a tree. Are these the Atman-Brahman, the Absolute? How can these limited objects, finite in nature, having birth and death and always changing, be That which is the Absolute, unlimited, infinite, beyond birth, death and change?

D: O Master, you have pointed out this fact a number of times before. As limited objects in space and time, they cannot be said to be the Absolute. But their essence is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute.

M: Now when you say their essence is the Absolute it im- plies that there is something which you call non-essence besides the Absolute. Has this 'non-essence' any existence apart from the Absolute?

D: It cannot have any existence apart from the Absolute, be- cause the Absolute alone is. Several examples you have explained to me to

illustrate this fact-the examples of thread and cloth, ocean and wave, gold and ornaments, rope and snake, the desert and mirage water, silver and nacre. Two objects are referred to in all these examples of which one of them alone exists and the other does not. Cloth does not exist apart from the thread. Similarly wave has no existence apart from the ocean. The ornaments like neck- lace, ring, bangle, etc., do not have an independent exist- ence other to gold. And there is no snake apart from the rope and no silver other to nacre. The examples are clear. But when I apply these examples, I find some difficulty. I don't perceive the Absolute which alone is, which is neither the subject nor the object. And I do perceive the world which is said to be not.

M: Who is this 'I' who does not perceive the Absolute and perceives the world?

D: The 'T' is not body-mind complex. The 'I' is Consciousness, the Atman-Brahman, which shines by itself in its own light in all the states of Yogic samadhi, deep sleep, swoon, dream, waking and death, eternally, uniformly and continuously without break. All these states along with my individual personality are like ripples or waves in that infinite ocean of Consciousness and therefore, they along with the triad of experiencer, the experienced and the ex- periencing, are pure Consciousness alone. All objects, speech, percepts, concepts, thoughts and other modifications of the mind and also their absence in samadhi, deep sleep, swoon and death are that one, non-dual Consciousness, even as the ripples and the calm ocean are water and water alone. I understand that the Absolute transcends all the states and yet all the experiences in all the states are That alone.

M: As far as words can explain the Absolute, what you have said is quite all right. These are now concepts in the mind and hence, the oscillation of your mind. Now practice nididhyasana, deep meditation on this and you will realise the Absolute and all doubts will vanish. God bless you.

23. DVA-SUPARNA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE TWO BIRDS)

"In the same single tree of this body, live two birds of beautiful plumage, the vijnanamaya'tman also referred to by the term jiva the individual, and the Atman. Both are inseparable, great friends having manifested themselves from the same cause. The jiva-bird eats the fruits of the tree, the pleasurable and miserable results of his past kar- mas, while the Atman-bird merely sits on witnessing, with- out eating. On this tree, the jiva is stuck up, as it were, and so it moans and wails, being worried by its impotence. When it sees the other, the Lord and His glory, it is liberated from all sorrow" says the Mundaka Upanishad in the first two verses of the first section in the third chapter. The Svetasvatara-Upanishad also gives these two verses verbatim (IV-6 and 7).

The Kathopanishad gives the same truth in a slightly different language. It says that there are two, the jivatman and the paramatman, in this body (world) who have entered into the supreme cavity of the heart, the former enjoying the result of its deeds and the later remaining as a witness. The knowers of Brahman and the wise house- holders call them as shade and light (I-3-i).

Though there appears to be some difference in the descriptions given in the Mundaka-upanishad and the Svetasvatara-upanishad on the one hand and the Katho- panishad on the other, they are not different vidyas, but one only. The attributes in the two sets of verses are to be combined and the whole treated as one vidya (vide Brahma Sutras III-3-xxxiv).

One should meditate on the identity of the jiva and the Atman, through the help of these analogies of the two birds in the same body, and the light and shadow. One bird, the jiva, while in ignorance suffers by experiencing the results of his karmas in past lives. The other bird, the Atman remains as the unmoving and unchanging wit-Ness. And

the Upanishad says that when the jiva sees the Atman, it realises that it is the Atman itself and it is freed of all miseries, because it loses its separateness and individuality. In the ignorant state of mundane life, one considers oneself as separate from the world and God. But, on the realisation of the Truth, all differences vanish and along with them all pain and misery also disappear. The analogy of the light and shadow helps us to under- stand the truth that while the Atman is all light, all knowledge, the jiva is only a shadow, an unreal appearance which has no existence apart from the light. The examples of the rope and snake, desert and mirage, mother-of-pearl and silver are to the point. "Can this solid world before me including my body and mind be unreal like a shadow or the rope-snake?"-is a serious doubt that arises in the mind of many aspirants. This doubt can be cleared thro- In ugh another analogy, the analogy of the film show. a series of rapidly moving films in a cinema a man appears standing like a motionless statue. This is explained as due to the defect of the instruments of perception, viz., the eyes together with the mind. These are incapable of coping with the rapidity of the movement of the films. Similar is the case with our perception of the world including our body. The eyes and the other organs together with the mind through which we perceive the external world of objects, are not able to catch up with the velocity of the electronic waves, the electro-magnetic vibrations constituting the world, and hence, they appear as objects to the eyes, as sound to the ears, as smell to the nose, taste to the palate and as something hard or soft, smooth or rough, to the touch. Hence, this world is not really as it appears to our senses. Going deeper into the constituents of the objects, which the scientists cannot do, due to the defective nature of their scientific instruments, their senses and the mind, the Upanishadic Seers have, through intuition, 'seen' the ultimate cause or essence, the Consciousness which appears as the world. Therefore, they call this world of the senses an illusion, in the sense that it is really not as it appears, but is the pure Awareness which is the Self of all. Leaving off the appearance which is termed a false

super-imposition, one has to meditate on the substratum which is free from both objectivity and subjectivity.

Another beautiful analogy given by the wise to illus- trate the fact of the co-existence of the jiva and the Atman is the damaru, a drum-like percussion instrument that is held by Lord Siva in one of his hands. The shape of the damaru is like two cones touching at their apexes. While one cone has as its apex above, the other has it down. Both the cones look alike, but one is pointed upwards while the other downwards, inverted. Similarly, the reflection of a man standing near water is inverted, with the head down and the feet up. In the reflection in a mirror, the left side appears as the right, and vice versa. While the man is facing east, his reflection faces west. Similar is the case of the Atman and jiva symbolised as two birds and as light and shadow. While the Atman is real, eternal, immortal, all-pervasive and omniscient, the jiva is unreal, temporal, mortal, localised and possessing limited or little knowledge. The blissful nature of the Atman is seen as pleasure and pain in the jiva. In one sense, the jiva has all the characteristics of the Atman, but in a topsyturvy manner, as in the reflection. God and man are like the two cones of the damaru, like the two birds or the light and shade of the Upanishadic analogies. Both are in the heart, the spiritual heart. What is the relationship between the two? The answer is there is no relation, and there cannot be any relation as one alone is real, the other being unreal and illusory. There cannot be any real relation between the real and the unreal, existence and non-existence.

The instrument we use for meditation is the mind. Its natural tendency is to go out. The Kathopanishad says: "Lord has created the senses with an outgoing tendency. Only a rare discriminating spiritual hero, aspiring for liberation and immortality, turns the senses and the mind inward by withdrawing them from their objects and realises the Self" (II-1-i). As long as the mind which starts meditation, remains extroverted, okaying the reports of the senses which say that the

objects are real, meditation cannot be successful. One should, therefore, practise withdrawal of the senses and mind and also concentration before starting upasana, meditation, as instructed in this vidya.

The result of this meditation is freedom from sorrow, as stated in the Mundaka-upanishad verse III-i-ii. The next verse says that the knower of the Lord who is the Creator of this world, becomes illumined and shakes off both virtue and vice and similar pairs of opposites, becomes free from the conception of differentiation and separateness, becomes taintless and attains equal vision. He attains gradual liberation krama-mukti.

SECTION-VI

MANDUKYA-UPANISHAD

24. MANDUKYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED BY SAGE MANDUKA)

This vidya occurs in the Mandukya-Upanishad which is one among the important major Upanishads. The Mandukya- Upanishad is highly praised in another Upanishad, viz., the Muktika-Upanishad wherein it is said that the one 'Man- dukya' alone is enough for liberation to the sincere and earnest seeker after the Supreme. The mandukya-vidya occupies a unique place among the foremost vidyas of the Upanishads. The subject matter of the vidya which is none other than the Supreme Absolute is dealt with most directly without any story or allegory or metaphor as in many other vidyas. Sri Acharya Sankara starts his commentary on this Upanshad with two in- vocatory verses which give the gist of the whole meditation. The Acharya in these verses bows down and prays for protection to that Being who experiences in the waking state all gross objects by pervading them through His consciousness, His own light, enjoys the subtle objects of desire in the dreaming state, gets Himself immersed in the bliss in the deep sleep state by withdrawing all the gross and subtle objects within Himself and becomes free from all attributes and who is called turiya, the Supreme, immortal and birthless. So, this meditation is on this Supreme, with the help of the limiting adjuncts of the three states. Here, Brahman is known and realised through the relationship subsisting between name and the named, viz., the object, both of which are nothing but Consciousness, an- other name for Brahman.

The Upanishad says that one should meditate on the letter or syllable (akshram) Om as all this. How? The Upanishad itself gives the answer which forms further exposition on this meditation. This world in all the three periods of time-the past, present and future-and also that which is beyond the three periods, should be meditated as Om. As all objects are indicated by names, they are non-different from the names. Names are again non-different from the syllable Om which is the first sound vibration, and therefore, the matrix, as it were, for all words

and sounds. Hence, Om is all this-this world of objects, gross, subtle and cau- sal. That which is beyond the three periods of time, which is not namable is the Unmanifest and that also is Om. Here, the emphasis is on the word or the letter Om.

Shifting the emphasis to the thing named or signified, the seeker should then meditate on 'all this' as verily Brah- man and 'this Atman' as Brahman-sarvam hi etat brahma, ayam atma brahma. These are very significant sentences, aphoristic in expression which reveal the Supreme Truth. The guru tells the truth accompanied with a gesture of hand, pointing the first finger to the world in front when saying 'this' (etat) in 'all this is verily Brahman', and by placing the hand on the heart (the chest) when saying 'this' (ayam) in 'this Self is Brahman'.

The meditation can be combined with the chanting of Om or it may be without it. The chanting may be oral or mental. The mental chanting is superior to the oral. In the case of oral chanting, it is efficacious when the sound is of a mild, gentle and soft tone. Though it is stated for purposes of meditation, that Om consists of three syllables a, u, and m with 'silence' as the fourth, one should not separate these syllables in chanting. The results of meditation always depends on the bhava or the feeling of the mind while meditating. For, as the sruti says, one becomes as he meditates-tam yatha yatha upasate tadeva bhavati.

Further exposition to help meditation as given in the Upanishad, reveals the Atman as possessed of four quarters. The first quarter is visva cum vaisvanara. He is to be meditated as having seven limbs, whose sphere of actions is the waking state wherein gross objects are experienced through His nineteen mouths in the waking state. The seven limbs are: heaven his head, the sun his eye, air his vital force, space his middle part, water his bladder and earth his two feet. The five sense-organs, the five motor-organs, the five pranas together with the mind, ego, intellect and the subconscious mind, form the nineteen mouths, as it were, of vaisvanara, because just as one takes

food through the mouth, He takes in all experiences through these nineteen gates of perception. This Atman is not to be limited by the individual body, but should be meditated as the whole, the virat or vaisvanara consisting of all the worlds.

The second quarter of the Atman is to be meditated as the taijasa cum hiranyagarbha, the totality of the subtle universe. He is also possessed of the seven limbs and nine- teen mouths as in the case of visva cum vaisvanara, but the field of activity here is subtler compared to the other. It is the dream world as seen in the waking state, In this meditation on the second quarter, the consciousness of the meditator passes on from the gross to the subtle.

The third quarter of the Atman is prajna cum isvara, the experiencer of the deep sleep state where there is neither the waking world nor the dreaming world. Everything has gone into the unmanifested state, a mass of conscious- ness, as it were, without any particularity, but full of bliss, bliss that transcends pleasure and pain.

The fourth quarter is turiya that transcends the three quarters wherein the meditator is not having particular consciousness of the external nor the internal world, nor both. It is also not a mass of consciousness as in the third quarter. It is not simple consciousness nor awareness of everything simultaneously. It is also not absence of con- sciousness or unconsciousness. Just because this fourth quarter is such, It cannot be perceived by any of the senses or mind. It is beyond the grasp of the motor organs. It is uninferable, and therefore, unthinkable. Because It is unthinkable, It is indescribable through words. In short, It is beyond all empirical phenomenon, It is to be realised through the unchanging, firm, unshakable faith that It is the same Self that subsists always in all things, in all states, waking, dreaming, deep sleep, swoon, death and samadhi.

This faith starts with a belief in what one does not perceive and ends with the supreme reward of 'perceiving' what one believed.

Laying emphasis on the letter Om, one should meditate on the same Atman with the four quarters with the help of the three letters constituting the syllable Om, viz., a, u, and m and the letterless or partless 'silence'. These are referred to in the Upanishad as matras, the three matras and the amatra. The seeker should meditate thus: 'the matras are the quarters and the quarters are the matras'. The turiya, the fourth quarter referred to by the term amatra here is the same in both cases. It is the transcen- dental aspect. The first matra a should be meditated as visva-vaisvanara having the waking state as His sphere of activity. The second matra u is taijasa-hiranyagarbha having the dream state as His sphere of activity. And the third matra m is prajna-isvara who has the deep sleep state as the sphere of activity (non-activity). The partless Om is turiya beyond the phenomenon of this world, virat and hiranyagarbha. It is beyond the unmanifest, isvara and transcends all limitations. It is the non-dual and the most auspicious.

The Upanishad gives the result of meditation thus: He who meditates and realises the identity of the first matra a with visva and vaisvanara in the individual and the universe respectively, attains all desirable things and becomes the foremost among the great. He who meditates and knows that he is one with the second matra u which is the same as taijasa and hiranyagarbha, increases his know- ledge, rises higher in the level of consciousness, becomes equal to all, does not become an object of envy to his enemies, and in his line none is born who is not a knower of Brahman. When he himself has become Brahman, to him all are nothing but Brahman. The whole world is his family and it is Brahman itself. How can there be an ignorant man there in his vision? It can never be. He who meditates on the third matra m as prajna and isvara who is the great absorber, himself becomes the absorber or the devourer of the whole universe. To him there is no universe separate from him, outside or external to him. And he who meditates on the amatra as the Atman which includes the three matras and transcends

them, identifies himself with the Atman of four quarters. He is non-different from the visva, taijasa and prajna in the individual and virat, hiranyagarbha and isvara in the universal and he transcends the all. The individual and universal coalesce into the transcendental.

Even now there is no difference between the individual and the universal. They are two sides, as it were, of the same coin. That is why the Upanishad indiscriminately uses the characteristics of the one for those of the other. Similarly, the karika (commentary on the Upanishad by the great Gaudapadacharya, the grand-preceptor of Sri Sankara- charya, and which has practically become a part of the Upanishad itself) makes very clear the fact of non-difference of the three states by referring to all the three states some- times as deep sleep and sometimes as dream. There is only one, non-dual Reality. All differences and contradictions are transcended in It. Drops in the ocean are neither different among themselves nor different from the ocean. All is water and water alone. The term turiya meaning the fourth, is a name superimposed on the nameless Reality with reference to the three states of waking, dream and deep- sleep. For that matter, 'Reality' is also a name super- imposed on That which is beyond speech and mind.

ekatma-pratyaya-sara is a term used in this vidya which is very significant. This term means that the Atman is the essence of one Selfhood. It transcends the mind and intellect both in their individual and universal aspects. Thus should one meditate. Though this meditation starts with a mental concept, as meditation proceeds, the concept drops off and the meditator is in that great Beyond, sometimes referred to by the pronoun 'That' (tat) which is beyond space, time and causation. Even the words 'existence', con-sciousness', and 'bliss' used to give the essential definition of Brahman, only limit the limitless Brahman who is the all and beyond the all. Even neti, neti-not this, not this, the best definition of Brahman, will be found to be still lacking in some respect, and hence,

all these terms and their concepts have to be transcended. Even Its expression in silence, the great silence of both speech and mind which is symbolised in the chinmudra of Sri Dakshinamurti, also has to be trans- cended. In this great ultimate Silence, not only the clamour of the senses and the mind but also the turmoil of the universe is hushed. Still, if this is also conceptualised, one has to transcend that concept too.

The extroverted mind cannot know even the nature of the universal. It cannot rise to the virat-consciousness, much less the hiranyagarbha-consciousness. How can it at- tain isvara-consciousness, the state of the equilibrium of the three gunas, the prakriti in its pure state stripped of the unreal superimposed veils? It is extremely It is extremely difficult, nay impossible. This is beautifully illustrated through the incident in the great epic Mahabharata where the Kaurava king, Duryodhana and his brother Dussasana, wanted to undress Draupadi and see her naked, in the open royal court of Dhritarashtra but miserably failed in their attempt. The Supreme always keeps His sakti safely hidden from the view of the ignorant, the extroverted mind full of sense desires. But to the meditator the whole prakriti becomes an open book. maya which is another name for prakriti, comes un- der his control, for he directly realises that it is non-different from his Self, the Supreme Brahman,

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita says: "Those who having restrained all the senses, ever meditate on the im- perishable, the unmanifest, the omnipresent and the unthink- able, the unchangeable, the immutable, the eternal, always equanimous and intent on the welfare of all beings, reach Me" (XII-3 and 4).

Does the world cease to exist when the Atman-Brahman is realised? 'prapancha-upasamam-cessation of all pheno-mena', 'santam sivam advaitam-peace, auspiciousness and non-dual', is the description given in this Upanishad. The Karika gives the reply in verse No. 17 of the first chapter. "prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samsayah:

mayama- tramidam dvaitam advaitam paramarthatah-no doubt the world will cease to exist if it had existence, but the fact is that there is no world apart from Brahman and then where is the question of its cessation!" Is it that the snake seen in the rope through an error, existed there in reality and then ceased to exist by the removal of the error? Certainly not. Why? Because the snake did not exist in the rope before seeing the snake, even at the time of seeing the snake and after seeing the rope. The rope alone exists all the while. Even so, is the case here. In the past before the so-called creation, during the present when the phenomenon is seen and in the future when everything dissolves at the time of the so-called cosmic dissolution, there is no world different from Brahman. Brahman alone is. It is the Atman. This is the knowledge that one gets through this meditation and this knowledge bestows on the meditator sadyomukti, immediate liberation. It is both jivanmukti and videha-mukti, embodied salvation and disembodied salvation.

25. 'AYAM ATMA BRAHMA' MAHAVAKYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE GREAT SENTENCE THIS ATMAN IS BRAHMAN')

Mandukya Upanishad mantra 2 declares: "sarvam hi etat brahma, ayam atma brahma-All this is certainly Brahman, this Atman is Brahman". This is the anubhava-bodha vakya, the sentence that gives expression to the inner intutive experience of the innermost Self by the aspirant through nididhyasana, deep meditation. The word 'this' in 'this Atman' signifies a gesture of hand by placing it on the heart.

The meditation on this sentence "This Atman is Brah- man' yields to the meditator the supreme transcendental experience which is beyond the meaning ordinarily conveyed by the words of which the sentence is constituted, the direct experience of the real oneness of the Atman and Brahman, the individual Soul and the supreme Absolute. The Tejo- bindu Upanishad tries to express this inexpressible Truth about the Atman when it says: atmeti sabdahino-ya atma sabdartha varjitah, sacchidananda hino-ya eshaiva'tma sanatanah- that supreme eternal Atman is devoid of the name 'Atman' and its meaning and also its nature as exist- ence-knowledge-bliss.

This mahavakya should not be understood as express- ing the identity of two separate entities, the Atman and Brahman. It is best illustrated by the scriptures through the identity of the same person seen at two different places and two different times. Let us say Mr. X, a friend of mine, who was seen by me at Bombay in 1940, when he was a healthy and hefty youth of 30 years of age, was seen again by me at Madras in 1980 after a lapse of 40 years when he had grown old with grey hair, sunken eyes and wrinkles all over the body. I recognised him and exclaimed: "O, this is that Mr. X". Here the word 'that' indicates the friend as a young man in Bombay in 1940, and the word 'this' refers to the same friend as an aged man in Madras in 1980. The appearance of the person on the two occasions, the places and the times of meeting

were completely diffe- rent and still the man was the same. My remark "this is that Mr. X" does not signify the identity of two persons, 'this person' and 'that person', but signifies the same person, my friend Mr. X, referred to under two mutually opposed sets of circumstances of time, place and appearance. In this illus- tration, the sentence declares a fact which is different from the individual meanings of the words 'this' and 'that' and establishes their identity. Even so, in the sentence "This Atman is Brahman', the import of the sentence as a whole, is beyond the literal meanings usually conveyed by the words of the sentence and signifies absolute unity or one- ness which is non-dual.

Scriptural passages can convey knowledge transcen- dental, the knowledge of the oneness of the Atman, the essence in the individual and of Brahman, the essence in the universal. The two wrong notions born out of nescience that Brahman is not the Atman and the Atman is not Brah- man, are removed completely by the two substantives, 'the Atman' and 'Brahman' having the same case-ending (vibhakti) and placed in apposition and denoting one and the same entity. Here, Brahman is not distinct from the Atman, nor the Atman distinct from Brahman. Their unity is quite distinct from the unity of, say, a red rose flower and its red colour. Though the unity of the flower and its colour is almost inseparable, the colour 'red' and the flower 'rose' do not always co-exist, as there can be an yellow coloured rose flower without the red colour. But in the case of the Atman and Brahman, the co-existence is eternal. The word 'Atman' refers to the Self in the individual and the word 'Brahman' refers to the Self in the universe. There cannot be two Self-s, for one of them has necessarily to be non-self when the other is the Self.

The direct experience 'this Atman is Brahman' leaves. nothing to accept or avoid. Yet, it does not cease to be man's summum bonum, since as a result thereof, he attains all good and wards off all evil. He experiences directly, not through the medium of the senses and the mind, but through intuition which transcends both, the Reality of

Atman-brahman and the unreality of everything other to It. Do the Vedas and the Upanishads also be- come unreal? Yes, in that Supreme Absolute, when everything is the Atman-brahman, anything considered other to It, has to be treated as unreal (mithya). But there cannot be anything other to the Atman-brahman, the infinite Absolute. This is the state after attainment of this supreme knowledge through nididhyasana-deep meditation, and not before. In the state of ignorance and during the period of one's sadhana, the Vedas and Upanishads are never to be considered as unreal. They are to be looked upon as the highest authority for everything. Vedas are the only source of right knowldege regard- ing matters transcendental, even as the sense-organs like the eyes, ears and the rest are considered to be the source of right knowledge regarding forms, sounds and the like in the phenomenal world.

In the oft-cited analogy of the mistaking a stump of a tree at a distance for a man, in a moonlit night, what happens is that during the existence of the illusion, I say 'O, there stands a dacoit'. I have then no idea of the stump at all. But after knowing the truth, that it is a mere dry stump of a felled tree, I say 'O, the dacoit is a stump'. Similarly, in the state of ignorance we say, 'this is the world', the word 'this' referring to the totality of the reports of the five sense-organs and the mind. The wise who have realised the Truth however, say 'this world is Brahman'. What do they mean by this statement? They mean that 'this' which appears as a world of infinite variety, is Brahman in essence, even as in the illustration, one says 'the dacoit is the stump of the tree', meaning that what one first saw as a dacoit is really not a dacoit but only a stump. It is clear that a dacoit can never be a stump of a tree. But in this case, it is possible, because the 'dacoit' is unreal and non-existent. When the truth is known, the "dacoit' virtually disappears in the stump. This, in the Vedantic parlance, is called badha samanadhikarana. When two substantives in a sentence have the same case- ending and they denote the same thing, they are said to

have samanadhikaranya relationship, the same locus. This relation is of two kinds, primary and secondary (mukhya and badha). When the two words indicate the same reality or the same essence, as in the identity of the space within a pot and that in the vast atmospheric space outside the pot, it is mukhya-samanadhikaranya. And when they do not imply the the same thing and when one is sublated later when the truth is known, as in the case of the stump and dacoit, it is called badha-samanadhikaranya.

In the interpretation and understanding of the meaning of the mahavakyas, such as tat-tvam-asi, aham-brahmasmi, prajnanam brahma, ayam-atma brahma, sarvam kalvidam brahma, atmaiva-idam sarvam and similar others, a section of the advaita vedantins accept badha-samanadhikaranya relation between the two words such as tvam and tat, aham and brahma, prajnanam and brahma, etc. Another section accept the mukhya-samanadhikaranya relationship and deny the other.

In the mahavakya ayam-atma brahma-this Atman is Brahman-under discussion, if we attribute the limted jiva as the meaning of the expression 'this Atman', then we have to accept badha-samanadhikaranya and sublate 'this Atman', and we are left with Brahman alone. On the other hand, if we accept the meaning kutastha-the immovable, unchangeable and the eternal Self-for 'this Atman', then we can accept mukhya-samanadhikaranya and establish the identity of the Atman and Brahman by sublating the un- real limiting adjuncts of the two.

A famous verse, the authorship of which is attributed to Sri Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, says: "hari-reva jagat jagad-eva harih, harito jagato nahi bhinna tanu: iti yasya matih paramartha gatih sa naro bhavasagaram-uttarati Lord Hari is verily the world, the world is verily Lord Hari and there is not even the least difference between the two; he who understands and realises this Truth is saved from the ocean of transmigratory existence". Here the first part 'Lord Hari is verily the

world' may be interpreted through mukhya-samanadhikaranya relationship and the second 'the world is verily Lord Hari' under badha-samanadhikaranya relationship.

As long as one thinks that there is a real world outside and external to the Self, one cannot have any success in meditation. This is the secret of meditation. So, even at the preparatory stage, the aspirant should get the firm conviction that the world is not real as it is taken to be by the completely ignorant. There is really no 'object', because each and every one feels oneself as the subject. That is the reason why everyone says 'I' when referring to himself or herself or itself. This applies to not only human beings but also to all others including animals, plants, minerals, elements, atomic and sub-atomic beings all of which are vibrant with prana. But in our ignorance, we forget this great truth. Even when the 'others' remind us about this truth constantly, may be unconsciously, by referring to themselves as 'T', we continue to refer to them as 'you', 'she', 'he', 'it', 'that', 'this', etc. And what is the result of this mistake that we commit? All of them join together and protest and give us kicks and blows. This is the real cause of our suffering. As the Brihadaranyaka- upanishad says: "All ousts one who knows the all as different from the Self" (IV-5-vii). So, if I am sincere in my seeking the supreme Absolute, the first and foremost thing I should do is to make a continuous, honest attempt to establish myself in the conviction that the world that I see is not outside 'Me', the pure consciousness and that the externality and differentiation appearing to the senses and the impure mind, are non-different from Me.

One who meditates on this mantra "This Atman is Brahman' gets the direct experience of the Reality-Absolute. He feels (again, this feeling is not a function of the mind or intellect): "I' is the all, 'I' is this empirical universe of the waking state, 'I' is the imaginary universe of the dreaming state, 'I' is the apparent void of the state of deep-sleep, swoon and death, 'I' is the transcendental Being of the samadhi." This

state of his is generally known among the sadhakas as sahaja-samadhi. It cannot have any name for reasons obvious. It is beyond all words and also thoughts.

SECTION-VII

TAITTIRIYA-UPANISHAD

26. MAHA-SAMHITA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON GREAT CONJUNCTIONS)

This vidya occurs in anuvaka (section) 3 of the first chapter, siksha valli of the Taittiriya-upanishad. The Upanishad prescribes contemplation on conjunctions in relation to five groups of things. They are not five different medita- tions, but a single one.

One should meditate earth, prithivi as the first form, the first sound, i.e., the first of the two sounds joined together forming the conjunction. The heaven, dyauh is to be meditated as the second sound conjoined. The intermediate re- gion, akasa is the junction in this meditation, i.e., the mid-space between the first and the second sounds or the place where the two sounds are conjoined. Air, vayuh is to be contemplated as the medium, i.e., that by which the two sounds are joined together at the junction. For example, take the word ishe-(t)-tva. The sound ishe is earth, tva is heaven, the junction between the two is the intermediate region and the additional t is air. Thus should one meditate on the conjunction with regard to the worlds-earth, hea- ven and the intermediate region.

Next, the sadhaka should meditate in relation to lights, jyautisham. Here, the fire is to be meditated as the first sound, the sun as the second sound, water the junction and lightning the medium. In relation to knowledge, he should meditate the teacher as the first sound, the pupil the second sound, knowledge taught as the junction and instruction as the medium. Similarly, with regard to progeny, mother is the first sound, father is the second sound, progeny is the junction and procreation the medium. And in the last with regard to the Self, the lower jaw is the first sound, the upper jaw is the second sound, the organ of speech is the junction and tongue is the medium. 'Self' here means the physical body of the meditator with the sense organs and consciousness.

To those who take pride in being born in the modern scientific world, in this atomic age, this and other similar medtations may seem to have not only no great meaning, but also may appear as having no sense at all, perhaps even frivolous and fantastic. This is understandable, because to them the real world is that which they perceive through their senses and anything beyond the senses is non-sense. They are only to be pitied. All reasoning by the individual mind with all its passions and prejudices is im- potent as far as the realisation of the ultimate Truth is concerned. Here, sraddha, faith, unshakable conviction on the declaration of the scripture and one's own Master is a must. Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj says: "Do you not take for granted many things in geometry on mere faith? The teacher says: a line has length but no breadth, a point has position or space but no magnitude. Are these really correct? Do you argue on these points in any manner with the teacher? You simply take them for granted. Is this not blind faith? These statements which are not real- ly correct, you are ready to accept on faith as correct statements. Again, how do you know that Mr. So and So is your father? Your mother only knows who your father is. She told you 'He is your father'. And you accepted it. Is this not on blind faith? Though you are not able to see the sun behind the clouds or at night, you do not say there is no sun. Though you are not able to see your own mind, you do not say there is no mind. Though you do not see electricity in the wire, you do not dare to touch the live wire because you believe that there is electric current and touching it will be fatal. Even so, though we are not able to see God. He exists in every object, every name and form-says the scripture. We have to believe and based on the belief, we have to practise sadhana. Our belief will certainly be re- warded."

The result of this meditation is that the meditator would attain progeny, wealth, spiritual effulgence, with all kinds of food to eat in this world and also enjoyment in the heavenly world after death.

27. VYAHRITI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE VYAHRITIS)

This vidya instructs the spiritual aspirant to meditate within the heart, on the conditioned Brahman, hiranya- garbha as embodied in the vyahritis. The teacher of this vidya was Mahachamasya and the disciple to whom the vidya was imparted was Prachinayogya. The four vyahritis for contemplation are bhuh, bhuvah, suvah and mahah. The first three are the symbols for meditation on deities, and the fourth is the symbol for the conditioned Brahman. vyahritis are mystic syllables or sounds uttered in various rituals and sacrifices. The fourth vyahriti, mahah was, it is said in the Upanishad, discovered by the great sage Maha- chamasya, son of Mahachamasa, who should be remembered and contemplated upon in this connection and it forms an integral part of the meditation (vide Tai. Up. I-5).

The vyahriti, mahah should be meditated upon as Brahman. The similarity to help contemplation is that both the words mahah and Brahman have the connotation of being great. mahah is also to be contemplated as the Atman because it pervades all. Just as the conscious self, the Atman is superior to the limbs in the body, the vyahriti, mahah is superior to the other three vyahritis, bhuh, bhu- vah and sunah which are symbols for the deities.

The vyahriti, bhuh is to be meditated as this world, bhuvah as the intermediate world, suvah as the other world and mahah as the sun. It is by the sun that the worlds exist and grow. Next, the vyahritis should be meditated as the gods-bhuh as agni (fire), bhuvah as vayu (air), suvah as aditya (sun) and mahah as chandramas (moon). This is to be followed by the meditation of the vyahritis as vedas, bhuh as the mantras in the rigveda, bhuvah as those in the sama-veda, suvah as those in the yajurveda and mahah as Brahman whose symbol is om. The next meditation is on the vyahritis as the pranas, bhuh as prana, bhuvah as apana, suvah as vyana and mahah as food.

Thus, in this four-fold meditation, each of the four vyahritis becomes four, bhuh as world, agni, the rig- mantras and prana; bhuvah as intermeditate region, vayu, sama-veda mantras and apana; suvah as the other world, sun, the yajurveda-mantras and vyana; and lastly mahah as the sun, moon, om, and food. The four vyahritis are considered as the supreme purusha in His sixteen phases.

This contemplation is to be done in the heart-ether (hridaya-akasa). The conditioned Brahman is to be meditated as seated in the heart-ether, limited by the mind or consciousness, full of light. The Brahman which is declared as if He were external and remote, is now to be contemplated as immediate and within one's own heart. Though really He is everywhere, all-pervasive, the Upanishad locates Him inside the space within the fleshy heart of the size of the thumb, in order to facilitate meditaton. This meditation may be said to be similar to the dahara-vidya. In this vidya, the sushumna-nadi is said to lead the meditator to the birth- place of indra, the conditioned Brahman also called hiranya- garbha.

The result of this meditation is stated thus: He who contemplates on the vyahritis as described above, attains the knowledge of the conditioned Brahman and to him deities offer tribute. indra and other celestials contribute to his enjoyment. He identifies himself with the conditioned Brahman whose body is the bright space, whose nature is truth, whose delight is life, whose mind is bliss, who is replete with peace and immortality. He attains self-lordship. He identifies himself with hiranyagarbha who is called Brahma in the Puranas and similar scriptures. He will have no desires. He sees everything perfect. He does not see differences between the pairs of opposites. He is always unaffected by the changes in this phenomenal world. He has nothing to gain or lose by getting anything or parting with anything. It is said that Lord Siva plucked off one of the five heads of Lord Brahma, but the latter did not care to grow the lost head, although He is capable of doing it. He is the creator of all beings in the universe and there

cannot, therefore, be any difficulty at all, to create a head for himself if only He wanted it. Why He is not doing it? Because He knows fully well that He has nothing to gain from doing something or from refraining from doing some- thing. Whatever happens, let it happen so. Why should it be otherwise! He possesses this supreme Knowledge. Similarly Lord Siva who is the symbol of renunciation and austerity, who has burnt to ashes Kamadeva, the god of love himself, is keeping his consort in one half of His body and behaves as if He cannot part with her even for a moment. Why this apparent contradicting behaviour? Be- cause He also knows that there is nothing to gain by remaining with His consort or by renouncing her. Let things be as they are-is His attitude. Again take the case of Vishnu. Those who take to his name are freed of rebirth. But He himself takes birth after birth in this world as Rama, Krishna, etc. What is the mystery behind it? The answer is that He sees no difference between rebirth and freedom from it, a pair of opposites, even as he sees no difference between the other pairs of opposites. Let there be rebirth or no rebirth, is His attitude. The trinities are not different personalities as many think in their ignorance. Similarly virat and hiranyagarbha and isvara are not three entities different and separate from the Brahman who is saguna and nirguna at the same time. This is the experience of the meditator who meditates on the vyahritis as instructed in this vidya.

28. PANKTA-VIDYA-1

(MEDITATION ON FIVE-MEMBERED GROUPS-1)

This vidya occuring in the Taittiriya Upanishad I-7, prescribes another meditation on the conditioned Brahman, hiranyagarbha in panktas, i.e., five membered groups, per- ceptible to the eyes. This may be said to be a comparatively easy meditation. The three groups of five members among external objects in the world are: (1) earth, mid-region, heaven, the main quarters (east, south, west, and north) and the intermediate quarters (south-east, south-west, north- east, north-west); (2) fire, air, sun, moon and stars; and (3) waters, plants, trees, space and virat. These constitute the worlds, the deities and external beings respectively. The second three groups of five members among the internal objects in the individual are: (1) prana, vyana, apana, udana and samana; (2) the eye, ear, mind, speech and touch; and (3) (3) skin, flesh, muscle, bone and marrow.

According to the Vedas, five-syllabled is pankti. The number five enters into the meter which goes by the name pankti. The universe, is constituted of five elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth. Therefore, the universe is said to be pankta. Both the outer world and the inner world are constituted of five-membered groups. Because of the identity in the number, one identifies oneself through meditation with the external and internal worlds, the manifestation of the conditioned Brahman, hiranyagarbha. The three five-fold groups of external things and the three five- fold groups of internal things enumerated in this vidya together represent the whole universe, the conditioned Brahman which is the object of contemplation.

The result of this meditation is the attainment of hiranyagarbha-consciousness and gradual liberation. His mind will not be agitated on any account even while living in this world attending to his secular duties. He will possess the quality of 'supreme indifference' to the happenings in his life as well as in the life of others.

There was an old man living in a small hut in a village near the mountains. He had with him his only son. He was a poor farmer. He had only one horse to call his own. He was earning his livelihood with that horse, by using it for carrying loads and also persons, tilling the soil, pulling carts, and so on. One day the horse ran away into the forest and disappeared. The villagers hearing this news went to the man to condole with him for the great loss. They pitied his position and expressed their sympathy. They said: "O poor man, how unfortunate you are! You have lost your only horse. What are you going to do now to earn your daily bread? We are all sorry for you". Hearing this the poor man merely remarked: "Is it so." A few days passed. One morning when the man came out of his hut, he saw his horse standing near the gate along with another horse. Hearing that the man has got two horses, the neighbours and others in the village ran to him to congratulate him. They said: "How fortunate you are! You have now not only got back your horse but also obtained a new one. You are really very lucky. We have come to congratulate you." The man now also did not make any comment but merely said: "Is it so". Now the new horse had to be trained. His son was entrusted with this work. While riding one day the horse threw him down. He had a fracture on one of his legs. This news spread throughout the village and all people came to sympathise with him for this unfortunate incident. Now also this man did not say anything. He as before remarked: "Is it so". Days and months passed. The young son was treated. He was cured but could not walk properly as before. He had to limp. One year passed and there was war in the country and there was conscription. Young men were being recruited for the army. The authorities came to this village also and recruited all the young men in all the houses. But when they came to this old man's hut, they were disappointed. The son was young, hefty and healthy, but was limping. Therefore, he was not recruited. Hearing this all the villagers who have 'lost' their sons, came to congratulate our old man. They said: "O man, you are really very fortunate. We have to send our dear sons to the

army, we do not know what will happen to them. We feel so miserable. But you are lucky." To this also, the old man said the same three words: "Is it so". This old man, a rustic without any education in the modern sense of the term, had a balanced mind which did not react to the external circumstances favourable or unfavourable. Loss of his only horse, gaining of two horses, a serious fracture in one of the legs of his only son making him almost lame for the rest of his life, and the exemption given to his son from compulsory conscription-all these did not affect his mind which was always calm. calm. This extra- ordinary calmness of the mind must have been the result of his spiritual Sadhana in his past lives, in the form of meditation.

29. SATYAM-JNANAM-ANANTAM-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON TRUTH-KNOWLEDGE-ETERNITY)

"satyam-jnanam-anantam brahma-Brahman is Truth- Knowledge-Infinity"-this mantra occurs in the opening paragraph of the second chapter named ananda-valli or brahmananda-valli in the Taittiriya-Upanishad. The declaration vijnanam-anandam-brahma-Knowledge-bliss-Brahman-forms part of subsection 7 of mantra III-9-xxviii of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad.

According to Acharya Sankara, the words "Truth', 'Knowledge', 'Infinity', 'Bliss' are not adjectives qualifying the substantive word 'Brahman'. They mean satyam-brahma- Truth-Brahman, jnanam-brahma- Knowledge-Brahman, anantam-brahma- Infinity-Brahman and anandam-brahma- Bliss-Brahman. A thing is said to be satya, Truth when it does not change its nature under any condition. Anything which changes its nature is therefore asatya, untrue or un-real. The phrase Truth-Brahman, distinguishes Brahman from all untruth, unreal things. As Brahman is the material cause of the world and as the world is insentient a doubt may arise that Brahman also must be insentient, as generally cause and effect are of the same nature. To clear this doubt, the Upanishad adds 'Knowledge-Brahman'. Knowledge means consciousness. This Knowledge is not the limited objective knowledge, but it is the pure Consciousness freed cf all objectivity, and therefore, freed of subjectivity also. Brahman is not an agent of knowing or doing. He is Being itself which is indicated by the words anantam-brahma- Infinity-Brahman. vijnanam also means Consciousness pure which is identified with anandam, Bliss. This term 'Bliss' means that supreme happiness which does not depend upon any subject or object, which does not brook any interruption or break that we generally experience in the enjoyment of objective sense pleasure. Thus, this satyam-jnanam-anan- as sat-chit- tum-vijnanam-anandam-brahma is the same ananda which is really one single name, though consisting of three words

grammatically, giving the essential definition of Brahman (the svarupa lakshana). This transcends the relative definition, (tatastha lakshana) which also occurs in this Taittiriya-upanishad in the first mantra of the third chapter known as bhrigu-valli. It runs as follows: "yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani jivanti, yat prayantyabhisam visanti tat vijijnasasva, tat brahma-iti- That from which all these beings are born, having been born. by which they live, and into which on departing they enter, is Brahman". This definition is in relation to the world, but the world ceases to exist after the final dissolution till its next creation. Brahman, being Infinity, always remains even in the absence of the world. Hence, a better definition which will hold good for all time even after the dissolution of the world, is provided in the term sat-chit-ananda mean- ing Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute.

The word 'existence' is a simple word to understand when it is attached to a sense object or mental percept such as existence of a table, existence of the sun, existence of a thought and so on. What is Existence-Absolute? It is difficult to explain through words. We may say It is Existence freed of all objects and percepts. Objects and percepts may cease to exist, but Existence can never cease to exist. What about non-existence? Non-existence of objects we can understand, but pure non-existence can never be. Why? To the question whether non-existence exists or not, there can only be two alternative answers, viz., (1) non-existence exists, and (2) it does not exist. If non-existence exists, we have to accept existence. If, on the other hand, non-existence does not exist, then it only establishes the existence of existence. Thus, none can prove complete non-existence. This itself is the proof for Existence- Absolute which is independent of the presence or absence of object and subject.

Similarly, Consciousness-Absolute is Consciousness or Knowledge independent of objects. 'I know a pot', 'I know a wall' these are objective knowledge. This kind of know- ledge is always changing. It is the function of the individual intellect. It is a modification of the

intellect (buddhi-vritti). It can take the negative form also, as in the case of statements such as 'I do not know music', 'I do not know the fourth dimension', etc. But, in both the above two kinds of positive and negative forms of changing knowledge, there is the constant presence of the unchanging knowledge, 'I know'. In the first case it is in the form of "I know that I know a pot'. Otherwise how could I say 'I know a pot'! In the second case, it is in the form of 'I know that I do not know music'. That is why I am able to admit my ignorance of music. So, in both the cases of knowledge of objects and the ignorance of objects, the 'I know' persists. It does not cease to exist. It illumines both the presence of objective knowledge and its absence which is called ignorance, even as a light illumines both the presence and absence of objects inside a room. This Knowledge-Absolute or Consciousness- Absolute is the same as Existence-Absolute.

Bliss-Absolute should be differentiated from sense happiness or pleasure which is born out of contact with or separation from objects, and, therefore, short-lived and ends in pain. Like the two terms 'Existence' and 'Conscious- ness', 'Bliss' also points to that supreme state where there is neither any object of enjoyment nor the agent of enjoying, nor the act of enjoyment. All our sense and mental happiness and joy are limited and distorted manifestations of this transcendental Bliss. This Taittiriya-upanishad itself gives a calculus of joy in chapter II, section 8. It starts from human joy and ends in the joy of hiranyagarbha. There it is stated for illustration, that one unit of joy may be taken as that joy enjoyed by an emperor who has the whole earth under his control. This emperor is in his prime of youth, exemplarily noble and learned, perfectly healthy and hefty, in possession of the whole world filled with all riches and enjoyable objects. His joy is taken as one unit to measure the joy enjoyed by others in the higher worlds which are nothing but higher levels of consciousness. The Upanishad mentions ten higher levels of consciousness, those of human gandharvas, celestial gandharvas,

pitrs, ajana-devas, karma-devas, devas, indra, brahaspati, prajapati and brahma, and says that in each succeeding level of consciousness, the joy is a hunderd times that of the just preceding one. Thus the joy of brahma is human joy of the world-emperor multiplied by the number 1 followed by 20 zeros. It is very difficult to grasp this by the mind. Even the human joy, the joy of the emperor of the whole world of the description given in the Upanishad, is not possible of actual experience by any human being. What to speak of brahma's joy! And this joy of brahma is stated to be an infinitesimal fraction of the Bliss of Brahman or Bliss that is Brahman. To compare brahma's happiness to a spray and the Bliss of Brahman to all the oceans of the world put together, may not reveal the truth completely. And that is Bliss which is Brahman, which transcends all, being infinite, which is Bliss- Absolute and which is the same as Existence-Absolute and Consciousness-Absolute.

anantam, 'Infinite', is another word which is used in this essential definition of Brahman. All finites put together will not make Infinite which includes everything and excludes everything and transcends everything. The Infinite which is Brahman is not the totality of all the worlds, the billions of universes. It pervades and fills all of them and extends still beyond. The Chhandogya-upanishad says Brahman is bhuma, which also means Infinite, the Plenum, the Whole, and adds that that which is bhuma, the Infinite is alone Bliss, and this bhuma is that in which one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else. That is Immortal. Thus Infinity is Bliss. Bliss is Consciousness. Consciousness is Existence-Infinity-Bliss-Brahman.

Do these words define Brahman? No, is the answer. For, to define a thing is to limit it and separate it from other things. So to define Brahman is an impossibility. Then what is the justification for this essential definition of Brah- man as sat-chit-ananda, or satyam-jnanam-anantam or vijnanam-anandam, and so on? Scriptures and sages use these words for want of better words to instruct the

disciples. They are trying to describe That which is indescribable. Their attempt is to express in words That which is beyond the mind, speech and all the organs. This Upanishad in mantra II-9-i says: "yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha that from which speech along with the mind returns without reaching it".

The wise say that these words such as satyam and the rest mentioned as the essential definition, should not be interpreted in their usual positve sense lest they may limit the Unlimited. They should be understood as pointing out that Brahman is not asatyam, not ajnanam, not sa-antam, not dhukham-not non-existence or void, not unconscious or inert, not with end, not pain and misery. This essential definition, therefore is the negation of all, as in the famous mantra 'neti neti-not this, not this' which occurs in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad in more than one place. Then does it deny Brahman? Certainly not. Who can deny Brahman! The denier can never be denied. Brahma Sutra III-2-xxii says: "prakritaitavattvam hi pratishedhati tato braviti cha bhuyah-the Upanishad verily denies the limitation that is being dealt with and then speaks of 'something' more". Through logical arguments, this sutra establishes the fact that Brahman is that which remains after the denial of all. The denial enjoined in the Upanishad leads to Brah- man and not to void or non-existence. The word 'Brahman' is derived from the root-word brh having the sense of vast- ness, that which is not limited by space, time, causation and objects.

The result of this meditation is stated in the mantra: "brahmavid-apnoti param-the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme". What is the Supreme, if not Brahman itself! Through this meditation, one attains that which one medi- tates upon. The Mundakopanishad also tells us the same result. It says anyone who knows that supreme Brahman becomes Brahman indeed-sa yo ha vai tatparamam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati (III-2-ix).

What do the terms 'knows', 'attains' and 'becomes' mean in this context? With reference to the supreme Brahman, the Infinite, the non-dual, the immortal Being, the ordinary meanings of these terms cannot fit in. All the three are transitive verbs which require an object to complete the meaning. Brahman cannot be an object of a verb. Further, attainment and becoming come under the four results of actions, the other two being transformation and purification. Actions being perishable, their results cannot but be perish- able. Hence Brahman can never be the result or effect of any action. Knowing or realising Brahman is no action. We can never know the Absolute as we know objects, since all the senses and the intellect can know only external objects but not their own Self, the Atman which Brahman is. All our attempts to know Brahman as something outside us, different or external to us, will result only in failure. For, It is that which pervades everything, like the rope pervading the snake or the gold pervading the necklace (yena sarvam idam tadam). Any one who thinks that he has known Brahman is like the man born blind thinking that he has known the colour of milk from the description given by his wife. 'What is milk like?'-asked the blind man. His wife said 'It is pure white in colour'. What is white like?'- the man again queried 'It is like the swan,'-replied the wife. 'What is swan like?'-was the next question put by the man. The wife, stopping further oral description, shaped her fore-arm and the palm with closed fingers bent and pointed like the beak of a swan. She said 'swan is like this', and hit him with that arm. The man using his hands felt the wife's bent fore-arm wth the pointed beak-like-palm, and then with a feeling of satisfaction exclaimed: "My dear, I have now understood what milk is like. It is like your fore-arm with the closed pointed palm. I am satisfied, thank you".

Just as white colour cannot be understood without the eyes and any information about colour obtained through the sense of touch cannot give the right knowledge about the colour, even so, none. of the sense organs can know the Atman-Brahman, but knowledge Supreme, call it

intuition or direct realisation alone will take us to the goal. It is not reaching or attaining anything new. We are already that. The false ignorance which appeared to cover the Atman (it cannot cover It, it never does cover It) is as though removed and the self-effulgent, ever- revealed Atman shines by itself. This is figuratively referred to by the statement that the knower of Brahman attains Brahman or becomes Brahman. Such a knower who realises Brahman treasured in the 'Cave' of his intellect, in the supreme 'Space', fulfils all wants simultaneously, all together. This fulfilment of desire is again not fulfilling one desire after another by possessing the objects liked or dispossessing those dis- liked through effort. It is the knowledge that I am one with the supreme Brahman which itself is this world of subject and object including me, my desire and its ful- fiiment. Putting the experience of such a sage in words is attempted in the Ashtavakra Samhita usually referred to as Ashtavakra Gita. According to the wise, this great scripture is included under what is known as kanta samhita and not under the other two kinds of samhitas, the prabhu samhita and the suhrit samhita. Here the dialogue between the two great spiritual giants Sage Ashtavakra and king Janaka is so intimate and secret like one between a lover and his beloved which cannot be made too explicit in words. In this holy scripture the sage during his instructions, makes a few remarks about a man of realisation of the Self. When one realises that one is the Atman-Brahman, where is the occasion for him to continue in external worldly duties? Any one if found involved in them, it should be considered as his spiritual ignorance, says the Sage. To this remark of the sage, king Janaka who is himself ruling a vast kingdom, living in a magnificent palace surrounded by all kinds of sense pleasures, replies revealing his supreme knowledge and direct experience in the following six verses of section 4:

hanta'tmajnasya dhirasya khelato bhoga-lilaya,

na hi samsara-vahikair-mudhaih saha samanata, (1)

O, wonder! The spiritual hero, the Knower of the Self to whom this life is a sport, has no comparison with the ignorant who are like beasts of burden of the world. He is free from the sense of doership and enjoyership.

yat-padam prepsavo dinah sakradyah sarva-devatah,

aho tatra sthito yogi na harsham-upa-gacchati. (2)

O wonder! The Yogin does not feel elated abiding in that Supreme state which even the great Indra and others hanker after but do not attain. He will not be involved in the apparant sense pleasures. He has no egoism.

tajnasya punya-papabhyam sparso hyantar-na jayate,

na hyakasaya dhumena drisyamano'pi samgatih. (3)

Certainly the heart of one who has known and realised the Self, is not touched by virtue and vice, just as space is uncontaminated by smoke even though apparently it (the smoke) exists in space. The pleasures and pains can never affect him.

atmaivedam jagad-sarvam jnatam yena mahatmana,

yadricchaya vartamanam tam nisheddhum kshameta kah. (4)

The wiseman who has known that the entire universe is nothing other to the Self, acts spontaneously (as he likes). Who can prevent him? He is incapable of doing anything wrong.

abrahma-stamba-paryante bhuta-grame chatur-vidhe,

vijnasyaiva hi samarthyam iccha'niccha-vivarjane. (5)

Among the four types of beings (garbhaja, andaja, svedaja and udbhija-born from the womb, egg, sweat and earth) from Brahma down to a blade of grass, the wise one alone has the capability to renounce desires and aversions, likes and dislikes.

atmanam-advayam kaschit-janati jagad-isvaram,

yadvetti tat-sa kurute na bhayam tasya kutrachit (6) Rare indeed is one who realises the Self as one without a second and as the Lord of the Universe. He does whatever he considers worth doing and has no fear from any side. Here, a great secret is revealed which is generally missed by the sadhakas. They should reflect over these verses with reference to what has been said by the sage in the just previous section of the text (section 3). There the sage has been prescribing certain do's and don'ts for a man of wisdom. In so doing the sage may or may not be having in his mind the luxurious life of his disciple-king. But the king seems to have taken the sage's remarks as a specific reference to his life, the life of a king with all his responsi- bilities and duties amongst the pleasures in a palace. Against this background, what the king says in these six verses, requires our special attention. These short but very suggestive verses should be studied very carefully, to know the real nature of a man of Wisdom. May be the Guru here is testing the depth of his dsciple's Wisdom. We cannot certainly think that the statements of the two are contradicting, or that the king is overriding the sage or superseding his Guru. King Janaka is always depicted in the scriptures as a great knower of Truth. He is said to be both a jivanmukta and videhamukta. It is very signi- ficant that the name of his kingdom is videha. Even when he was a young boy studying under his Guru, he is said to have made the following declaration pregnant with mean- ing and revealing the state of his consciousness even in that early age: "anantamiva me vittam yasya me nasti kimchana, mithilayam pradiptayam na me dahyati kimchana my wealth is endless but nothing is mine, even if the whole of the city of Mithila, (the capital of the Videha kingdom) is ablaze nothing of mine is burnt." While he was in his Guru's house studying along with a number of other students, one day they suddenly saw at a distance the whole city of Mithila in flames. All the boys who were then attending to their lessons suddenly got up and ran to take their loin clothes (their only possession) which

were being dried in the sun lest they may be burnt in the fire. It is said that the young Janaka alone sat unmoved with his mind on his lessons. The Guru then asked Janaka in the presence of the boys: "My dear boy, is not your loin cloth there, don't you want to remove it?" It is then that Janaka is said to have made the above statement. He was the prince and the would- be ruler of the kingdom. But, he said that even if the whole city is burnt nothing of his was burnt. Even in that young age he had no feeling of 'I' and 'mine'. It is said that the Guru wanted to show to the other students, that the boy Janaka was far superior to them. The whole scene of the city in flames was created by the Guru through his Yogic power.

30. PANCHA-KOSA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE FIVE SHEATHS)

The five kosas (sheaths) for meditation are the food sheath, the vital force sheath, the mind sheath, the intellect sheath and the bliss sheath. This vidya occurs in the Taittiriya-upanishad, chapter II. Therein over and above the meditation on the essential nature of Brahman, viz., 'satyam- jnanam-anantam-Truth-Consciousness-Infinity' (dealt with as a separate vidya under that name), is given the meditation on the Atman identified with the five sheaths. Starting with the annamaya-atman, the food-self it ends with the anandamaya-atman the bliss-self. It is stated that the supreme Brahman transcends all these in the statement brahma-puccham pratishtha-Brahman is the support for even the last, the subtlest sheath, the anandamaya kosa. If Brahman transcends all the five sheaths, why then the Upanishad enjoins meditation on the five sheaths? It is replied by the commentators that as it is very difficult for the ordinary aspirants to directly meditate on that trans- cendental, ultimate Truth, the Upanishads adopt what is known in nyaya philosophy as sakha-chandra nyaya-the maxim of pointing towards the branch of a tree to show the crescent beyond, on the third day after the new moon. It is auspicious to see the moon on the third day after the new moon day, and so people try to see it on that day when it is very difficult to see with the naked eye. One who has already located it, tries to show another trying hard to see it, by pointing towards a distant branch of a tree in that direction. Here though the branch is not the moon to be seen, it helps to see the moon. Similarly, the meditation on the five sheaths helps one to attain that which is beyond the five sheaths.

An important point to remember in this meditation is that the five sheaths are not real, substantial coverings of the Atman. Then what are they? They are, like the rope- snake, superimpositions given to us

to help meditation and finally to be de-superimposed leaving the non-dual Atman alone.

Another point that the meditator should not forget is that the sheaths are both in the subjective and the objective aspects, the individual and the universal levels of consciousness. In the subjective, they are to be meditated as though covering the Atman in this body, and in the objective aspect as though veiling Brahman. In the individual, they are the visva in the food-sheath, taijasa in the vital force, mind and intellect-sheaths and prajna in the bliss-sheath. In the universal, they are virat, hiranyagarbha and isvara. All these different concepts and names are only to help meditation. They should never be taken as real separate entities. For, in that ultimate Supreme, there is not even. a trace of difference, and if any one creates the least difference, he will be struck with fear, says mantra II-7. Another Upanishad says: "Where there is duality, as it were, there there is fear certainly".

These five successive sheaths starting from the food- sheath and ending with the bliss-sheath are subtler and therefore more pervasive than their just preceding ones. So, the sheaths which are stated to be inner to their pre-- ceding ones, are not like four boxes of decreasing sizes being kept one within another, the outermost containing all the four, the next inner one containing three and so on. They should be meditated as effects contained in the causes. The Ultimate transcends cause and effect. The bliss-sheath being the subtlest, is the cause of the remaining four. The intellect-sheath coming next, the effect of bliss-sheath, is the cause of the next three successive sheaths. The mental- sheath, the effect of the intellect-sheath, is the cause of the vital force and food-sheaths. And lastly, the vital force- sheath is the cause of the food-sheath, the grossest among the five. Starting from the food sheath, one should meditate on it as identical with the vital force-sheath, because effect is non-different from the cause. Through this meditation, one merges the food-sheath in the vital force-sheath. Next, the vital force-sheath should, through meditation, be merged in

its cause which is the mind-sheath, which in its turn should be identified with the intellect-sheath, and finally the intellect-sheath should be identified with its cause which is the bliss-sheath. Having come up to the bliss-sheath, one should transcend that also and become one with the supreme Brahman-atman which is beyond all cause and effect.

For the purpose of contemplation, each sheath is re- presented as having the shape of a bird having a head, two wings, the middle portion or trunk, and the tail. The sacrificial alter is arranged in the form of a bird, a hawk, a heron and the like, and hence this simile of a bird in this vidya.

This vidya starts with the meditation on the gross body, the physical-sheath as one's Self. By this contemplation the intellect is divested of its engrossment in external objects, the non-self and is directed steadily to one's own body. Here, the meditator's head is the head of the bird, the two arms are the two wings, the central part is the trunk and the part below is tail or support. Thus should one meditate.

The food-sheath is Brahman, because it is from food all creatures are born, by food they live and again to food they go at the end. This satisfies the definition of Brahman given in this Upanishad in chapter III, section 1. (The meditation in chapter III is dealt with in a separate vidya under the name bhargavi-varuni-vidya). Here 'food' means virat, the first born, the eldest. It is called the medicament of all (sarva-aushadham). It is called food because it is fed upon and it feeds on beings. All beings are absorbed in virat, and virat is absorbed in hiranyagarbha.

The meditator through the meditation on the food- sheath-Atman, has brought himself from the external objects. to his physical body limited by food, the grossest form of manifestation of Brahman. Now, the Upanishad instructs on the meditation on the immediately inner Self, the prana- maya-atman, the vital force-sheath by which is, as

though, filled the food-sheath. The pranamaya-atman should be meditated in one's own form, with prana as its head, vyana as the right wing, apana as the left wing, akasa which here means samana, as the trunk and the deity of the earth as the tail or support. It is through the vital force, prana, that all beings including devas, the celestial beings live. prana is life, the life duration, The pranamaya-kosa is, as it were, the Self of the annamaya-kosa which is its body. The meditator now leaves off the food sheath and becomes one with the vital force sheath. He is now no more the gross body, but is the subtle prana.

Next, he has to meditate on his identity with the mind. sheath, manomaya-kosa, which is subtler than the subtle pranamaya. This manomaya-atman has to be meditated as having the human form with the yajurveda for the head. the rigveda for the right wing, the sama-veda for the left wing, the brahmana portion of the Vedas containing in- junctions and instructions, for the trunk and the atharv-angirasa, for the stabilising tail. The mantras of these Vedas are to be considered as mental states. This mano- maya-kosa as the aggregate of all the senses, is to be meditated as one's Self. It is not yet the ultimate Self. The Upanishad, therefore, says in this context that Brah-man is that from which all words turn back along with the mind without reaching It and that he who knows Brah- man's Bliss fears not at any time (II-4-i). With reference to pranamaya sheath manomaya is the Atman.

The meditation is taken next to the still subtler realm of the intellect sheath. The intellect sheath, the vijnana- maya-kosa is, as it were, the owner of the manomaya-kosa. Buddhi which is made up of determinative cognitions, is regarded as the owner of the different states of the mind. It is the intelligence that performs everything, the agent of all the religious and secular activities. The vijnanamaya-atman should be meditated as having the human shape as in previous three cases, whose head is faith, righteousness the right wing, truth

the left wing, yoga the trunk and mahat the tail or support. This meditation results in the identification with hiranyagarbha.

This is not the Ultimate. It is true that hiranya- garbha, also called the saguna-brahman, is not easy of attainment. The spiritual hero who has attained this level cosmic consciousness of universal, of hiranyagarbha should not rest satisfied that he has attained the sum- mum bonum of life. The Upanishad says: 'Verily there is the anandamaya subtler than vijnanamaya'. This ananda- maya also falls under the category of effects and it is not the supreme Self. This is to be meditated again in the human shape with love for its head, joy the right wing, delight the left wing, bliss the trunk, and Brahman the tail, the stabiliser or support. When the subtlest hiranyagarbha- consciousness is also left behind as the non-self, what re- mains? Is it not emptiness, a vacuum or void? In order to remove this doubt of the aspirant, the Upanishad says that if the aspirant comes to that conclusion that Brahman is after all non-being or non-existence, then he himself will become non-existence. He attains no human aspiration, any more than one who is non-existent. The meditator at no stage of his meditation should entertain the idea that the Self exists as a kosa. In the rope-snake analogy, how can the snake have existence without the rope! So the anandamaya, which is inner to and subtler than the vijnana- maya, is the Self of the vijnanamaya. (Meditation on the anandamaya-atman is being dealt with next in greater detail as a separate vidya under the title "anandamaya-vidya").

Brahman which is beyond the anandamaya and which is the support of the whole universe consisting of the five kosas in the individual and universal aspects, is beyond thought and word. The meditator experiences It directly and immediately, without the mediacy of the mind and intellect. The ultimate result of this meditation on the five sheaths is stated in mantras II-8-v and vi. He realises that it is the same Atman-Brahman, the supreme Bliss, that resides in the human person and in the sun. He attains after transcending this external world, the

annamaya- atman, virat, then he attains the pranamaya-atman, mano-maya-atman and vijnanamaya-atman, hiranyagarbha, then he attains the anandamaya-atman, isvara and finally Brah- man, That from which words return baffled along with the mind, realising which, he is not afraid of anything. He is freed from all remorse in the form of 'why I did not do good and meritorious action?' and 'why I did bad and sinful ones?'. To him both vice and virtue, the cause of grief, are now the Atman-Brahman Itself.

This epithet 'Atman-Brahman' is not two words signify- ing two different entities, nor is it a compound word connoting a combined entity. This peculiar word attempts to express the inexpressible Truth, the Absolute which trans- cends the all and yet is immanent in the all. Direct realisation of this Atman-Brahman is the result that ensues from the practice of the Upanishadic vidyas. The word 'Atman' is used with reference to the individual 'I' and the word 'Brahman' with reference to the universal, the all. In different vidyas different words are used to express the same truth. To cite only a few instances-in the samvarga-vidya occuring in the Chhandogya Upanishad, the words used are prana and vayu to indicate Atman-Brahman; in the sandilya-vidya given in the same Upanishad, the words used are sarvam and Brahman, in the famous mahavakya, sarvam khalvidam Brahma-all this is verily Brahman; the Isavasya-upanishad gives in the great declaration, isavasyam- idam-sarvam, using the words isa and idam sarvam; in the mahavakya, tat-tvam-asi the two words tat and tvam refer to Brahman and Atman. These scriptural declarations reveal the identity of brahmanda and pindanda, the macro- cosm and the microcosm. Our present condition is like the space enclosed in a small pot thinking that it is separate from the vast space outside. Space is indivisible. Even the walls of the pot cannot create separation since they contain space. Similarly the five sheaths mentioned in this vidya or the five cosmic elements cannot create any division in the Consciousness which is homogeneous, indivisible and non-dual. What

should the pot-space do to become the vast outside space? It need not do anything not even imagine or think. It has to give up the wrong notion that it is different from the vast outside space. When pot-space gives up the wrong notion, does it become the vast space? No, for all along it has been the vast space and there has been no separation between the two, as no separation or division is possible. Similarly here we have only to realise our essential, eternal nature that we are always that pure Consciousness alone. Neither the body nor the other kosas or sheaths can create any separation from the infinite Consciousness.

31. ANANDAMAYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE BLISS-SHEATH)

This vidya is given in the Taittiriya-upanishad in chapter II, section 5, and mantras i to iv of section 8. Section 5 describes the anandamaya-atman, the Atman identified with the anandamaya-kosa the bliss-sheath, as internal to and pervading the vijnanamaya-kosa, the intellect sheath. It is the subtlest among the five sheaths. As already stated in the previous vidya, it has the form of purusha with joy as his head, enjoyment as the right side, hilarity as the left side, bliss as the trunk and Brahman as the tail, as it were, that stabilises. Section 8 in its mantras i to iv gives the various degrees of happiness, starting with the highest human happiness and rising gradually in ten stages and ending with the happiness of hiranyagarbha. The meditator should be well learned in scriptures and free from desires. The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad IV-3-xxxiii also gives an almost similar gradation of joy. (This has already been referred to in satyam-jnanam-anantam-vidya.)

In this calculation of joy, the Upanishad starts with the maximum limit of human happiness as one unit. Even this one unit is not available to any ordinary human being for enjoyment, as is seen from its description which says that one unit of human joy is that which may be enjoyed by an emperor of the whole earth, who is in his prime of youth, good in conduct and character, proficient in all scriptures, most expeditious, with a strong-built body, very energetic- all these qualities in the superlative degree-wth all the wealth and pleasures of the world under his control. Suppose there is such an empepror. It is only a supposition, a con- cept for the sake of meditation. For, an emperor of this description never existed in the past, does not exist in the present and perhaps will never exist in the future. His happiness is to be taken as one unit for calcu- lating the joy of those who are in higher planes of consci- ousness. The next higher plane is that of manushya-gan- dharvas, musicians endowed with a subtle body and senses, power of disappearance at will, with less obstacles in the way

of fulfilling desires and with greater and powerful ac- cessories and capacity to resist any obstacle in enjoying happiness. Their quantum of joy is a hundred times more than the human joy of the emperor of this whole globe. This amount of joy of the manushya-gandharvas is enjoyed by the meditator who is well learned in scriptures and is free from desires (srotriya and akamahata). This means that the happiness of the emperor of the whole world, with all kinds of desires as is natural to anyone in that position, which is the maximum limit of human joy, is only one hundredth part of the joy of one who is free from desires. Next in the progressive scale, come the divine gandharvas manes, ajana-devas, karma-devas, devas in heaven, indra the king of the celestials, brihaspati the preceptor of the celestials, prajapati or virat, and lastly brahma or hiranyagarbha. In each of these levels, the happiness increases a hundred fold of that of the just pre- ceding plane. Thus the joy of hiranyagarbha, the maximum joy in the relative plane is stated to be the maximum human joy multiplied by 100, ten times. It does not mean the mathematical figure arrived at by multiplying the human joy by many hundred folds. It only means that the joy is indescribable and infinite. The Upanishad lays stress on the fact by repeating it again and again, that the meditator who is well- versed in the scriptures, free from sin and desires, also enjoys happiness in all these different progressively increasing degrees when his desireless- ness reaches more and more perfection, when he goes more and more internal and near to the Reality. The happiness of one who is a knower of Truth and completely free from all desires is equal to that of hiranyagarbha. These are the different graduated levels of consciousness through which the meditator rises to perfection.

The different degrees of happiness is only the expression or manifestation of the supreme Bliss. There is really no division as lower and higher in the Bliss which is Brah- man. A mirror covered with thick, black, sticky smoke has to be cleaned a number of times to make it completely pure, capable of giving a clear reflection of the face. And

after each cleaning we say the mirror is becoming clear and more clear. But, the mirror by itself is always clean and capable of clear reflection. It is the smoke or the dirt which cover- ed it that is removed in stages every time it is cleaned. This removal of the dirt in stages is superimposed on the cleanliness of the mirror when we say that the mirror is becoming clearer and clearer. Even so, the mirror of the mind, which is Consciousness-bliss in its original state, is covered by the smoke of ignorance, desire and action. When this is removed in stages through sadhana in the form of hearing of the Truth, reflection thereon and deep medita- tion, we say the Bliss increases in degrees. Two important factors demanded of the meditator in this vidya over and above the usual qualifications such as discrimination, dis- passion, all virtues and intense aspiration, are a knowledge of the import of the scriptures and absence of desires. Of these two, the latter, viz., desirelessness, absence of the least desire for anything in this world or the heavenly worlds, stands as that factor which acts as the cause for the gra- dual manifestation of the Bliss in a progressive scale in proportion to its increase. As desirelessness increases in the higher levels of consciousness in the worlds of manushya- gandharva, deva- gandharva and the rest, the manifestation of Bliss is said to increase a hundredfold in each stage. This Bliss of a knower of Brahman is said to be the supreme Bliss, on a particle of which beings from hiranyagarbha down to the lowest being live (Br. Up. IV-3-xxxii). Those who consider themselves as separate from Brahman, due to ignorance, get only the distorted reflection of an infinitesimal fraction of the Bliss of Brahman, through contact of their sense organs with their respective objects. In the infinite Bliss of Brahman there is no triad, the triad of the enjoyer, enjoyment and the enjoyed.

As a result of this meditation, the meditator is freed from the error of perception of diversity created by ignorance and he experiences the supreme Bliss of hiranyagarbha.

He is not afraid of anything after realising this Bliss. He indentifies himself with hiranyagarbha and attains gradual liberation.

Under 'anandamaya-adhikaranam discussed in Sutras xii to xix of the first section of the first chapter of the Brahma Sutras, one's real nature during deep sleep is dis- cussed. The question has to be viewed from two stand- points, the absolute and the conditioned or relative. From the view-point of the Absolute, every one is always of the rature of pure sat-chit-ananda, whether in waking, dreaming, deep sleep, swoon, death or Samadhi. There cannot be any doubt about it. All discussions about both the conditioned and the unconditioned can only be in the conditioned state. Sages like Vyasa and Vasishtha have discussed again and again about the unconditioned Absolute. The Sages and their discussions which one reads or hears cannot but be the projections of one's consciousness (mind?). Both the 'conditioned' and its opposite or counterpart, the 'uncondi- tioned', have necessarily to be 'one's' own projection. The Absolute, the Atman-Brahman transcends them both. It includes all, excludes all and transcends all inclusions and exclusions, all at once.

Here, under this topic, as in other topics, Sri Acharya Sankara in his commentary on the Brahma Sutra states the doubt first, then the opponent's view and thereafter gives the Sutra (I-1-xii) anandamayo'bhyasat, as referring the opponent's view. The doubt raised by him is whether anandamaya refers to bliss sheath or Bliss i.e., Brahman. The opponent's view is that it is the former. Acharya says that this view of the opponent is refuted by the Sutra, which means that anandamaya is Brahman and not the sheath (anandamaya kosa). After confirming this view with the support of the seven succeeding Sutras (Nos. xiii to xix), the Acharya, contrary to his consistent practice followed in the case of all the remaining Sutras in the whole text of the Brahma Sutras, says in this particular case alone, that in this connection he has to say that the anandamaya means the blissful sheath, and thus seems to agree with the opponent's view.

There is, therefore, reason to doubt about what Badarayana, the author of the Sutras, wants to establish in these Sutras xii to xix under this topic. Does he want to establish that in deep sleep a person is one with Brahman or one with the bliss sheath, the causal body?

None can deny that the whole of the Brahma Sutra establishes that Brahman is the non-dual Truth, the world seen as though separate from it including the mind which is said to project it (the world), is mithya (seen as real though non-existent apart from Brahman) and the so-called jiva, the individual is really Brahman and Brahman alone and not anything distinct from It. The Acharya says in his introduction to Sutra I-1-xii that the remaining portion of the book is intended to show that although Brahman is one, It is spoken of in the Upanishadic mantras as either to be meditated upon with the help of Its relation with the limiting adjuncts, or to be known without the help of the relation.

In the first Chapter of the Brahma Sutras, on 'Reconciliation', more than two dozen Upanishadic mantras of doubtful import, starting with 'anandamaya' in I-1-xii and ending with "The Self to be seen, heard of, reflected on and medi- tated upon' in I-4-xxiii, are taken up and discussed. All of them excepting anandamaya have been reconciled by establishing that they mean only Brahman and nothing else. Hence, it is only reasonable to hold that the first one anandamaya also means Brahman and not the blissful sheath.

In Sutra 1-3-xiii even the term vijnanamaya purusha occurring in Br. Up. IV-3-vii, 'the person identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the organs', is established as the Supreme Brahman.

No useful purpose is served by proving that ananda- maya is the individual jiva in ignorance. It is well known to all in this world that the jiva in all the three states is in ignorance and that is why the aspirant world is striving for liberation from the bondage caused by ignorance.

No scripture is necessary to establish it through a long process of reasoning.

On the other hand, the conclusion that anandamaya is the Supreme Brahman can help the aspirant to realise the Truth that not only in the deep sleep state alone but in all the states he is the Supreme, pure Consciousness. When once he gets the firm conviction that in deep sleep he is in his 'Real nature', he can extend it to the dream state, when nothing really happens even though there is an un- real appearance of an unreal, non-existent world. When again through an impartial and unprejudiced judgement he is convinced that the waking and dream states are both made up of the same mental stuff and are an unreal super- imposition on the pure Consciousness, he can come to the final conclusion that the waking state also is pure Conscious- ness just as the other two states are. With this intellectual certainty arrived at through ratiocination based on one's own experiencec in the three states, one can start nididhya- sana and attain kaivalya.

This subject of the jiva in deep sleep state is again considered in the second section of the third Chapter of the Brahma Sutras. It is stated that in deep sleep, the jiva abides in Brahman in the heart. All statements in the scriptures regarding other places assigned for the jiva in deep sleep, should not be interpreted literally. Even the state- ment that the jiva has its abode in Brahman in deep sleep, has to be understood without making a distinction between the abode and the abider. There is no time when the jiva is not one with Brahman whether it is in deep sleep or death or dream or waking state. While this identity is very clear and self-revealed in the state of deep sleep, it is, as it were, veiled by a so-called unreal world and a phenomenal world projected by ignorance in the dream and waking states respectively. The experience of not knowing 'anything' in deep sleep is because of the non-dual nature of the Consciousness then, without the triad of knower, known and knowing, and not due to absence of Consciousness which can never happen.

Such knowledge without the triad serves the purpose of knowing, after waking, the identity of oneself with Brah- man. Any other knowledge one may get by literally inter- preting the statements in the scriptures such as 'there is ignorance in deep sleep', 'the jiva is resting in some nadi or pericardium during deep sleep', 'the jiva has merged in ignorance', 'the jiva rests in the region of the physical heart', 'the jiva becomes one with prana', 'the jiva rests within the ether of the heart', etc., do not serve any useful purpose to the sincere and ardent aspirant who is after the non-dual experience of the Truth, Sri Acharya Sankara concludes his commentary on Sutra III-2-vii with the follow- ing significant remarks: "We are out to prove that Brahman is the invariable locus of sleep. Such a know- ledge serves a purpose, namely that the jiva is ascertained to be identical with Brahman and it is realised to be free from the dealings consequent on the dream and wakeful states. Hence, the Self is the locus of sleep (tasmat atmaiva supte sthanam)". The several alternative statements of the scriptures should not be left out completely without any scope and dubbed as wrong statements. It is, there- fore, concluded that in sleep, the jiva passes as it were through the nadis and pericardium and rests in Brahman.

Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in his commentary on the anandamaya adhikarana (Brahma Sutras 1-1-xii to xix) has no two opinions on the nature of the jiva in deep sleep. He affirms that the jiva consist- ing of Bliss in deep sleep is not the individual with ignorance, but the Supreme Brahman Itself. We have already seen Acharya Sankara in his commentary on these Sutras, first affirms that the jiva in deep sleep is Brahman Itself and then he offers a different interpretation (correction?) and states that it is not Brahman but the individual jiva identified with the Bliss sheath. Sri Gurudev who does not give two different views on that occasion, however in his commentary on Sutra III-2-vii gives both the views. He says: "In deep

sleep the individual jiva rests in Brahman, but there is a thin veil of ignorance between him and the Supreme".

Both the Sruti and Smriti say: "In whatever form they meditate on Him that they become themselves". Brahma Sutra IV-3-xv also says that one becomes what one resolves to be and those meditators who entertain a resolution about Brahman alone reach Him. Under these conditions, who would hesitate to meditate that in the deep sleep state the individual jiva is one with Brahman! And who would wish to meditate that it is one with the Bliss sheath, a product of ignorance! The attention of the readers is also invited to the meditation on the deep sleep experience mentioned in the avastha-chatushtaya-vidya.

32. ASAD-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE UNMANIFESTED)

"asadva idam-agra asit, tato vai asit, tato vai sad-ajayata tad-atmanam svayam-akuruta, tasmat-tat-sukritam-uchyata iti- In the beginning all this was asat, Non-existence; from that verily emerged Existence; that Non-existence itself created itself and therefore, It is called the Self-creator"-- thus starts the asad-vidya, in section 7 of chapter II of the Taittiriya-upanishad. It instructs on the meditation of Brahman referred to as isvara in Vedantic texts, when the world remains in an unmanifested state.

The word asat as opposed to the word sat (existence), means non-existence. Here in this context, this word cannot be taken in that sense of complete non-existence. For, all these worlds, the infinite number of universes have come out of It. How can they come out of pure non-existence? Nothing can come out of non-existence. Hence, the meaning of the word asat is to be understood as the unmanifested Brahman. All these univeres were in an unmanifested form in that asat-the Unmanifested which is Brahman itself. "na'sato vidyate bhavah-from non-existence nothing which has existence can come", says the Bhagavad-gita II-16.

The logicians speak of four kinds of non-existence, viz., prag-abhava, pradhvamsa'bhava, anyonya'bhava and atyanta'bhava. prag-abhava is non-existence of an object before its creation, like the non-existence of a pot before it is made by the potter. This kind of non-existence has no beginning, but has an end. When the non-existence of a pot which is now made by a potter started, no one can tell but that non-existence ceases when the pot is made and comes into existence. pradhvamsa'bhava is non-existence of an object after its destruction. In the example of the pot, its non-existence starts when it is destroyed. This kind of non-existence has a beginning, but no end. The third kind of non-existence is anyonya'bhava which means mutual

non-existence. A pot is non-existent in a cloth and cloth is non-existent in a pot. This is an example of anyonya'- bhava. atyanta'bhava, the fourth kind is complete or ex- treme non-existence. They cite the example of the son of a barren woman, the hare's horns etc., which do not have existence at all. When we realise that all these differences are with reference to 'non-existence', there cannot be much meaning in them. Still for argument's sake, taking them for what they are worth, we find that none of these can apply to Brahman, the Unmanifested, the asat as it termed in this mantra. prag-abhava cannot apply to Brahman, because It is birthless. pradhvamsa'bhava also cannot have any meaning in relation to Brahman, because It is deathless, endless and eternal. anyonya'bhava is equally inapplicable in Brahman, for the reason that Brah- man is one and non-dual and there is nothing other to It. atyanta'bhava also has no relevance to Brahman, the pure Consciousness because It is Existence-Absolute. It is the Self of even the non-existence. The non-existence cannot have existence without Consciousness which gives existence to every- thing including non-existence. So, the word asat in this vidyo can never mean non-existence or complete void. It refers to the supreme Brahman, in Its unmanifested state, where there are no objects, not even the subject.

In the Brahma Sutras, the meaning of this word asat in this context is discussed. In the arambhana'dhikaranam, topic dealing with the origin of the world, the author of the Sutras says: "asad-vyapadesat-na-iti chet, na, dharm- antarena vakya-seshat, meaning that if it be argued that the effect did not exist before creation, i.e., everything was then non-existence, since it is declared in the Upani- shad as asat, non-existence, then we say 'no', because from the complimentary portion it is known that the word asat is used from the standpoint of a difference in the character- istics, viz., the manifested and the unmanifested nature of Brahman" (II-i-17).

In the Chhandogya-upanishad also, this word asat cccurring in mantra VI-2-i, is interpreted not in its etymo- logical sense, but in the sense of the unmanifested conditon of this world when it is one with the unmanifested Brahman.

In both the Upanishads where this word asat occurs. the latter portions which follow immediately, make this point clear by stating that the word asat does not mean complete non-existence but means the unmanifested state of the universe.

The scriptures speak of the Unmanifested from two view points. One is the unmanifested state of the universe, that which transcends the hiranyagarbha-consciousness, the seed state of the universe when the whole universe is in the causal state, like a big banyan tree within its atomic seed. This is the state of isvara-consciousness in the universal aspect and the state of deep sleep in the individual. It is the equilibrium state of the three gunas- sattva, rajas and tamas. It is also called mula-prakriti, maya, avidya, avyakta, avyakrita, etc. This is the lower Unmanifested. Beyond this, and transcending this, is the higher Unmanifested, the supreme Brahman who is also said to be the Unmanifested because in that transcendental state He cannot be perceived by the senses and the mind. aksharat paratah parah-the unconditioned, all-pervasive entity is higher than the immutable isvara. Really there are no two different Unmanifests. Both are one, the supreme Brahman but viewed from two standpoints. Brah- man and isvara are not two distinct entities. As the cause of the world-manifestation, Brahman is given the name isvara, in order that Brahman may be kept in Its pure transcendental condition untouched by anything. As there cannot be anything other to Brahman, the Brahma Sutras says that Brahman itself is the material and instrumental cause of the creation which is non-different from Him.

This vidya instructs meditation on this unmanifested Brahman. A doubt may arise as to how can one meditate on this as It is beyond the reach of the meditator's mind? Is not this meditation impossible of

actual practice? As Swami Vidyaranya points out in his Panchadasi, the meditator can start meditation on this Unmanifested with his mind, ofcourse a purified mind, freed of all desires. The meditation is on "That' which is beyond the mind and which cannot be thought of by the mind.' It is true that to start with this is only a concept of the mind. In due course, this meditation will bear its fruit, the fruit of becoming one with that Unmanifested when the meditator and his meditation merge in that unmanifested Brahman.

He is to be meditated as sukrita which means the good or meritorious act (punya). sukrita also means the Self- creator (svakrita)-the cause par-excellence. His creation is inscrutable, mysterious and beyond all logical expla-, nations, inferences and conclusions.

Brahman is verily rasah. This word rasah is generally translated as essence or anything that is a means for satisfaction or a source of joy or flavour which causes satisfaction. But here none of these can convey the full and correct significance of the word. A commentator says that the bliss of the Atman which is supersensuous, but which is a fact of immediate experience to those rare and fortunate souls who have realised the true nature of the Self, manifests outwardly as supreme peace which delights their minds. Such outward symptoms of joy and peace are seen in such souls, in the absence of any object what- soever which is the cause of pleasure, joy and peace in ordinary people. To those souls certainly Brahman and Brahman alsone is the source of joy, rasah.

The Upanishad says that if in the ether of the heart this Bliss were not to exist, who could even breath, mean- ing that Brahman that is referred to as the Unmanifested and rasah is the one supreme Self in all, who makes all beings in the world happy according to their merits. It is this supreme Self that is revealed only in Its limited forms in sentient and non-sentient beings on account of their ignorance. This One indeed enlivens all. The seeker should meditate on this One as

changeless, bodiless, in expressible , unsupporting and the seat of fearlessness. Such a meditator becomes fearless.

Brahman exists as the cause of fear in the men of ignorance and of fearlessness in the men of knowledge. For, fearlessness comes as a result of taking refuge in that which exists, viz., Brahman, whereas fear comes and cannot cease by resorting to something that does not really exist viz., objects of this world considered as other to Brahman.

The way to the ultimate Truth which Brahman is, is through the destruction of the false. To destroy the false we must be prepared to question our most inveterate and deep-rooted beliefs. It is a very difficult affair, for it will be dragging our own feet. The foremost and the strongest and at the same time the worst of such beliefs is the 'I am the body' idea. With this belief, comes the world, a real world before us, then the gods who have created us along with the world, then fear, then the various religious beliefs, prayers, sacrifices and all the rest of it, only to protect and support this body frightened out of our wits by imaginary monsters of our own creation. We have to go beyond the gross and the subtle, and also the causal and transcend the lower Unmanifest to attain the Goal which is referred to as the higher Unmanifest.

Once a saint narrated the following incident. One student of vedanta practising the higher meditations went to his master and put the question: "O revered master, I understand from the study of the karika of the Mandukya Upanishad that there is no bondage because there is no manifestation of sat. There is no liberation also because asat is unreal and non-existent. But tell me when sat and asat are both transcended, what is That which remains?" The doubt of the student was about That which is beyond the 'manifested' and the 'unmanifested', i.e., beyond hiranyagarbha and isvara.

The master was then busy raising a mud wall around his garden. While he was hearing the student's doubt, he was silently continuing to take

handfuls of clay from a shallow iron basin held in his left hand and going on shaping the wall. When the student finished his question, the master without replying to his question, threw away the mud as well as the basin, laughed aloud, washed his hands in the water in the nearby vessel, entered his cottage, closed the door and went to sleep. The student, who had come a long way with the sole purpose of getting an answer to this intricate question, was completely disappointed. He consulted the attendant at the door of the cottage who gave the message of the master that he should go back and wait till a certain monk happened to come to that place. He waited for the arrival of that monk. When the monk came, the student hastened to him and narrated the whole incident. The monk asked him: "I should say that the master was quite right and he has given the answer to your question. But tell me if I take you to him again, what will you do?" The student replied: "I would renew my question". Then the monk replied: "Then you will only renew the master's laughter and his action". Hearing this, it is said the student was enlightened. The answer to the question dawned, rather the question dissolved and he was freed of all doubts.

The student wanted to know That which is beyond the 'manifested' and the 'unmanifested', beyond the 'Is' and 'Is not', beyond 'existence' and 'non-existence'. As the answer cannot be given through words which can communi- cate thoughts or ideas only, the master showed it by throw- ing away all materials at hand, laughing aloud and retiring within himself. The master alone knows That which is the same in building and in non-building, and in laughing and lying down. By throwing away the mud, by his laughter and retiring into his room, he was giving the student the answer to his question which cannot be given in words. Any answer through words given by the master would only create a concept in the mind of the student and the master did not want to do it, as the answer to the question is beyond all concepts.

If he had said that God alone remains after the negation of sat and asat, the student would only have a concept of God and not God.

The result of this meditation on the asat, the unmanifested condition before creation, is that the meditator transcends both the manifested and the unmanifested and attains the Supreme.

33. BHARGAVI-VARUNI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO BHRIGU BY VARUNA)

This vidya is given in the Taittiriya Upanishad, chapter III, sections 1 to 6, through a story which runs as follows: Bhrigu, the son of Varuna (the regent or presiding deity of the waters), approached his father Varuna in the traditional manner as a disciple seeking after the ultimate Truth would approach a spiritual master and prayed: "O Lord, instruct me on Brahman". To him, the father and Guru Varuna said: "Food, vital force, eye, ear, mind, speech- these are the aids to the knowledge of Brahman." He also gave what is generally known as the tatasthalakshana, the temporal or accidental definition of Brahman in the follow- ing words: "That from which all these beings are born, That by which they subsist after birth, That to which they proceed and into which they merge-crave to know That well. That is Brahman." Bhrigu following his instructions started practising tapas, meditation and attained Brahman.

Food, vital force, eye, ear, speech and mind are said to. be the doors to the knowledge of Brahman. They are the doors as it were for the world of objects. Through meditation they are converted into doors to the supreme Know- ledge. It is with these, one realises Brahman as the Consciousness behind them, without which they cannot function.

Brahman cannot be defined as It is the very Self, the Infinite which defies all definition. However, as already stated before there are two kinds of definitions employed by the scriptures for instructing the disciples. They are the essential definition and the temporal or relative definition. The term sat-chit-ananda is the essential definition given in the scriptures. That which is given here by Varuna in this vidya is the relative one. It is in relation to the world. Brahman is said to be the cause of all these beings. How is It the cause? Is it like the parents being the cause of their progeny in this phenomenal world? Or is it like the carpenter becoming the cause of the furniture? Both the examples

are not to the point, for in both cases the cause remains outside the effect, different from the effect. But in the case of Brahman, it is something like the clay becoming the cause of a pot. The pot which is said to be born out of clay, remains as clay alone, and when destroyed, again it remains as clay. So, before the creation of the pot it was clay and during the period of the pot's existence, the pot still remains as clay. The caly does not change in any manner when it becomes a pot. When the pot is destroyed, the clay is not destroyed. It still remains as clay. Somewhat similar is the case of Brahman's creation of the universe. He is said to be both the material and instrumental cause. In the case of the pot, there is the potter and the wheel and other instruments in addition to the clay. In the case of Brahman, He alone is everything. He has projected this world without any external help. Even after the so-called creation or projection, He still remains un- changed. It is said that the universe, as though, rests in Him non-different from Him and finally merges in Him alone. Self-enquiry and deep reflection will reveal the truth of non-creation of the world distinct from the non-dual Brahman.

Bhrigu did tapas, says the Upanishad. The highest tapas is concentration of the mind on the definition of Brahman after withdrawing the mind from the senses and their objects. tapas is also said to be Knowledge of Brahman as the former leads to the latter. Bhrigu practised meditation although it was not specifically enjoined by his father. As the definition of Brahman given by the father, itself involves duality, he went on revolving in his mind what he had heard. This is meditation, the highest form of sadhana. As a result of this meditation done for a long time, with intense sraddha in his father's words, he realised that food is Brahman, because it seemed to satisfy the definition given by Varuna. It is from food, its essence the seed is formed and it is from that seed every being is born. It is on food everyone lives and it is into food in the form of earth that everyone goes and merges in the end. He realised the organic and

interconnected nature of the whole universe in its physical gross sense. But he had no complete satis- faction, because of the thought that this gross world having a beginning and an end, could not be the Infinite, Immortal Atman-Brahman which has no beginning and end. He approached his father to clear his doubt whether what he had realised was the final truth. The father did not give any further exposition on Brahman, but merely asked him to continue his tapas. The guru had already shown the path and it was for the disciple to walk the path alone by himself. Many aspirants expect the guru to give God-realisation to them as if it is some object and they are not willing to put forth effort by themselves. That this is an erroneous idea, is shown here very clearly by the Upanishad.

Bhrigu continued his upasana further and arrived at the conclusion that the prana, the vital force in the individual with its counterpart in the universe, the cosmic prana, was Brahman. Here also, the definition given by Varuna first seemed to satisfy the enquiring mind of Bhrigu. But his further meditation proved that this conclusion was also defective for the reason that the cosmic prana also has a beginning and an end. He again went to his father for the third time to get only the same reply 'meditate again'. On further meditation, more intensely and perhaps for a longer period, he thought that the cosmic mind which is subtler than prana was the ultimate Reality. It is the cause for the vibration of even the prana, and much more so for the experience of the gross world. This also did not give perfect peace. Again going to the father and again getting the the same old reply 'do tapas more', he meditated further. He now came to the conclusion that the cosmic intelligence must be the Reality he was seeking for. This also he found, in his further meditation, to be with a beginning and an end. Though it is subtler than and inner to the cosmic mind, to Bhrigu who was approaching nearer and nearer to his innermost Atman, there was some sort of externality or objectivity even in the cosmic intelligence different from the real innermost Self. Having gone

to the father and getting the same instruction to meditate further, and having continued his meditation, Bhrigu realised anandam, Bliss as Brahman.

He has now reached the inner-most recess of his heart, the supreme ether wherein is established the Atman-Brahman. He realised that this spiritual heart is in every object, starting from the cosmic hiranyagarbha down to an ant, in every being gross and subtle, big and small, the known and the unknown. It is, as it were, hidden in all from isvara down to the sub-atomic particle. The essence of everything, that by which the whole universe is constituted is this Bliss which transcends all matter and energy, all object and subject. It is same as sat and chit Existence and Consciousness. The same Upanishad in mantra II-7-i says: "raso vai sah-It (Brahman) is verily the Essence". It is the source of all joy in the universe. One becomes really joyful if one comes into contact with this alone. All other joys are external and transcient while this joy is one's own eternal Self. Attaining this is God-experience. There is really nothing other to It. All sense of joy is in a sense different from this Bliss both in its quantitative and qualitative aspects. We may also say that all sense-happiness is this Bliss in different garbs, veiled by the unreal names and forms. What about pain? Does this also come under Bliss? Yes is the answer. How can pain be Bliss? In this non-dual Bliss-Atman, a vibration takes place due to what is called the unreal maya, and now comes the mind, an expression of the same Bliss-Atman. This unreal mind assumes subjectivity and creates unreal differences such as pain and pleasure, good and bad, etc. Suppose there are dolls made of sugar in a sweet-meats shop. There are dolls of fruits, animals, men, and so on. Among them there are dolls of red, ripe chillies. Children may not want that doll as they take it to be real chilli which is very hot, fiery and pungent. But the adults know that it is really sugar which is sweet, that the chilli is a name and form covering the sugar, even as the same sugar is covered by other names and forms such as apple, mango, motor car,

aeroplane, and so on. Similar is the case with Bliss, sat-chit-ananda which is covered by different names and forms in this universe such as gods, demons, human beings, trees, pleasure, pain, good, bad, etc.

How can these limited, unreal names and forms really cover the Infinite Being? They cannot really cover It. The covering also is as unreal as the names and forms them- seives which seem to exist because of the Infinite Existence- Consciousness-Bliss. So, this world along with one's own body and mind, is really that Bliss to the knower of Truth, but to the non-discriminating, it appears as a real world different from the Self, causing pleasure and pain, birth and death and similar other pairs of opposites.

The result of this meditation is that the meditator be- comes firmly rooted in the sat-chit-ananda, the supreme Brahman. He realises that he and the world are non-different from Brahman. Visible material results are also vouch- safed for him. He becomes possessed of all forms of material wealth which come to him of their own accord without any effort on his part. He enjoys them all, as the Self of all. He becomes great not only in material wealth but also in Brahmic effulgence and attains all fame through his virtuous life.

34. ANNAM-ANNADAH-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON FOOD AND FOOD EATER)

At the close of the bhargavi-varuni-vidya in the bhrigu valli (Chapter III) of the Taittiriya-upanishad, is given this meditation on the 'food' and 'food-eater' in sections 7-10. The relevancy of this vidya at the end of the Upanishad which has dealt with some of the highest vidyas such as satyam-jnanam-anantam-vidya, anandamaya-vidya, the bhargavi-varuni-vidya, etc., is explained by Sri Anandagiri, the author of the gloss on the commentaries of Acharya Sankara, as follows: "Having taught that the direct means of the knowledge of Brahman is the constant meditation of the Reality underlying the entities denoted by the terms tat and tvam in the maha-vakya tat-tvam-asi and having stated the result in the concluding portion, the Upanishad proceeds to prescribe the contemplation on prana, etc., as an indirect means to the knowledge of Brahman, for the benefit of those who not being fully mature, are unable to practise the process of investigation described earlier."

This vidya instructs that one should meditate on prana, the vital force as food, because just as food taken remains within the body, prana also remains within the body. This is the similarity to help contemplation on the identity of prana and food. Anything that is encompassed by another, becomes the 'food', as it were, of the latter. prana is lodged within the body, and therefore, prana is to be meditated as food and the body as the eater of the food.

Now, one should also meditate on the body as the food of prana, says the Upanishad. On what ground? Because, the body is fixed in prana. The existence and continuation of the body is dependant on prana. Thus, this vidya instructs the meditation on prana as the food and the food as prana. Such meditations helps the aspirant in the final realisation of the truth: "I am indeed Thou, O Lord and Thou art indeed Myself".

The water is food and fire is the eater; and fire is the food and water is the eater. This is the next meditation under this topic. The water drunk is digested by the vaisvanara'gni, the digestive 'fire' in the stomach, and hence water is to be considered as the food of fire. The fire in the lightning is present in the rain water. Also the badav- agni, the submarine fire rests in the ocean water. Hence fire can be said to be the food of the water.

Next, one is to meditate on the earth as the food and space as the eater, for earth is contained within space. This should be followed, as in the previous two cases, by the meditation on space as the food and earth as the eater, for the reason that space is placed on the earth.

The meditator here should observe the vow that he should never condemn the food that comes to him. He should He not also abandon the food that is given to him. should try to have plenty of food, so that he may feed his guests and the poor without difficulty, and avoid the contingency of lack of sufficient food to feed them. He should not refuse anyone who goes to him for shelter.

The result of this meditation is that the meditator be- comes possessed of plenty of food. He will also enjoy the food, being possessed of good appetite and digestion. He becomes great through progeny, wealth, as also spiritual Above all these the meditator effulgence and renown.

ascends, as it were, to that level of consciousness from which he can, without effort, slip into the ultimate state where all differences merge into the pure Consciousness. This enlightenment consists of, we may say, three steps: (1) The world including one's own body-mind personality which appeared as real is seen as unreal. (2) Then, the substance (3) behind this unreal appearance is seen as the mind. Finally, this mind is realised as the pure Consciousness.

35. KSHEMADI-VIDYAS

(MEDITATIONS ON SAFETY, ETC.)

These meditations are given in the Taittiriya-upanishad III-10-ii to iv. There are sixteen meditations under this head which are, according to some, treated as separate meditations, the reason being that in mantra III-10-ii the word samajnah, meaning meditations, is in plural number. The results stated to be accruing from these meditations are also shown to be somewhat separate and distinct from the phenomenal and pragmatic point of view.

The first five meditations are: One should meditate on Brahman (i) as kshema, safety in speech, (ii) as yoga- kshema, acquisition and preservation in prana and apana, (iii) as karma, action in the hands, (iv) as gatih, move- ment in the feet, and (v) as vimuktih, discharge in the anus. These are meditations pertaining to human beings and their physical body. As safety of oneself and one's possessions depends on one's speech, the Upanishad enjoins on the meditator to contemplate Brahman as existing in speech in the form of safety. Similarly, he should contemplate on Brahman as existing in the acquisition and preservation caused by the exhaling and inhaling functions of the prana in him. Brahman is the ultimate cause of inhalation and exhalation which are responsible for all actions in the body constituting mainly of acquiring objects for enjoyment and preserving them safely. The cause of all work done is Brahman alone and hence a contemplation on Brahman as existing in the hands in the form of all action done by them, is enjoined. For the same reason, that which is behind all movement by the legs, and the discharge by the anus is to be meditated as Brahman.

The next six meditations relate to the gods, the limbs of the Cosmic Being. Brahman should be meditated (i) as satisfaction or contentment in rain, as rain is the main cause for the production of food and other necessities of life, (ii) as energy in lightning, (iii) as fame

in cattle wealth, (iv) as light in the stars, (v) as procreation, immortality (relative-attainment of heaven, etc.) and happi- ness in the organ of generation, and (vi) as the all that is in akasa, space.

The Upanishad then prescribes the last five meditations on Brahman (i) as possessed of greatness or greatness itself, (ii) as thinking, (iii) as bowing down or homage, (iv) as the most exalted and (v) as the destructive agent. The results of these meditations are attainment of great- ness, becoming a great thinker, possession of all desirable and enjoyable objects and becoming the most exalted. The meditator will also possess all means of living such as food and clothing, wealth and servants.

These results that accrue as a result of such meditations will not free the meditator from the thraldom of this samsara, the illusory world of repetitive birth and death. These results are petty and insignificant, mere toys and tinsels when compared to the supreme Liberation through Knowledge. Only persons who have no real dispassion will go in for such meditations yielding lower mundane results. Their limited, impure mind full of worldly desires, is not capable of aspiring for higher things. It is like the old widow who asked for merely two handfuls of cooked rice from a mighty king who was ready to give anything to her. In ancient days kings ruling small states, used to go incognito at night to get first hand information about the condition of the subjects. On one such occasion, when the king of a small state in South India was moving during night, his enemies knowing his movements followed him. The king understood that he was being pursued by some people and he took shelter in a house in the nearby village for the night. There was only an old poor widow in that house. As was usual in those days, seeing somebody in the outer verandah the old lady extended a warm welcome and gave him a very crude bed and a pillow. She then enquired whether he had taken his food. Getting a negative answer from the unexpected stranger guest whose identity she did not know, she gave him a little cold rice, some

buttermilk and a little condiment. He ate that frugal food and slept inside the house.. Early in the morning before sunrise, he woke up the lady and bid farewell. Before leaving the house, he revealed his identity to the old widow and said: "O Mother, I am very grateful to you; I consider you as my own mother; know that I am the king of this country; I am prepared to give anything to you, for saving my life from my enemies who were following me, by giving me shelter and also food for the night. Please ask whatever you want and I am ready to grant all that you ask". The widow was surprised to know that it was the king who was her night guest. She thought for a while what to ask. She was a simple rustic not in need of anything except one time simple food. That was all that she could think of. Therefore, she asked the king. "O great king, kindly grant me a handful of cooked rice from the village temple daily at noon". The king was surprised at the simplicity of the woman and then said to her: "O Mother, do you know that I am the king of this state and I can give you anything in this country. Please ask whatever you want". The old lady thought for a moment and said: "O king, is it so? You can give me more! All right, please issue orders to give me another handful of cooked rice every night also". She could not think of more than this. Similar is the case with those who start meditation with desire for mundane and heavenly enjoyments without knowing that the aim of human life is God-realisation. They are ignorant of the infinite Bliss. They can only think of worldly enjoyments or at the most heavenly pleasures which are but tinsels, mere straw before the Bliss of the Self. It is a pity that when God is ready to grant them Immortality and eternal Bliss, they desire and pray for worldly possessions under the deluded notion that they can give real happiness.

As the Mudgalopanishad mantra 3 says 'tam yatha yatha upasate tathaiva bhavati-as he worships Him, so he becomes', results depend on the nature of one's medi- tation. This is the firm declaration of the Seers. The aspirants should never forget this great truth. They should

desire only for the Infinite Self. The same mantra says: "tasmat brahmanah purusharupam parabrahmaivaham- asmiti bhavayet, tadrupo bhavati-therefore, let the wise- man meditate 'I am verily the purusha, the Supreme Brahman' and he becomes That." These meditations given under kshemadi vidyas and other similar ones will in addition to giving worldly happiness and heavenly enjoyments, purify the mind of the aspirants, qualifying them to practise higher meditation and for the dawn of the final Supreme knowledge, the detroyer of the unreal ignorance and the bestower of Liberation.

SECTION VIII

AITAREYA-UPANISHAD

36. AITAREYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED BY SAGE AITAREYA)

This vidya is contained in the Aitareya-upanishad chap- ter I-1 to 3. The Upanishad is known by the name Aitareya- Upanishad as it is revealed by the great seer and sage Aitareya, the son of Itara which is his mother's name. The whole Upanishad is highly symbolic and metaphorical and explains the real nature of this cosmos as nothing but pure Existence-Consciousness. The language being archaic, it is difficult to understand the import behind the words, even with the help of the commentaries. The sage instructs the vidya to the seekers of Truth such as Vama- deva and others. The Upanishad in chapter II makes mention of Vamadeva who realised the Supreme even while he was in the womb of his mother in his next birth (vide vamadeva-vidya).

"om. atma va idam-eka evagra'sit; na'nyat kinchana mishat; sa ikshata, lokannu srija iti-om, in the beginning this was but the Absolute Self alone; there was nothing else whatsoever that winked; He thought 'let me create the worlds'." Starting with this statement of the condition before creation, the Upanishad till the end of the first chapter, gives the details of creation of the worlds con- stituting this cosmos, all the while laying emphasis on the one fact that Brahman, the Absolute Himself has become all this which appears as though separate from Him. The fact that He Himself has, after this mysterious creation, as though, entered into all the bodies pervading them wholly like the thread in a cloth, further confirms that this creation along with the created is verily He Himself. Thus the individual jiva is He Himself masquerading as a limited, bound soul who appears as the sadhaka and finally realises his real nature as the Absolute itself. The chapter closes by giving a name to that Absolute which has no name, as indra to help meditation. indra is a shortened or indirect form of the word idandra which means he who has directly realised 'this' (idam), the whole cosmos as Brahman that is immediate and direct, and the Atman that is within all, the transcendental sat, that was before

creation, and that will be after the dissolution. This is the gist of the meditation given in this Upanishad.

It has been said in the first mantra cited above, that in the beginning this was but the Atman alone. What is this Atman? Its conventional meaning is the individual Soul. The Linga Purana gives the etymological meaning of the word 'Atman', as that which pervades, absorbs, and enjoys all objects in the world and from which the world derives its continuous existence. Acharya Sankara ex-plains the word as derived in the sense of comprehending, engulfing or pervading, and says that it signifies one that is the highest, omniscient, omnipotent and transcendental to all worldly attributes such as hunger, thirst and the like, and is by its very nature eternal, pure, conscious, free, birthless, undecaying, immortal, fearless and without a second. Such attributes are given to that infinite Being to help meditation by the aspirants. Such was the Atman who alone 'was' before creation, who alone 'is' even now during the existence of the cosmos, and who alone 'will be' after its dissolution. For if there is creation, there must be dissolution also. If there is birth there must surely be death also. The past tense 'was' the present tense 'is' and the future tense 'will be' used here are with reference to this phenomenal world of time, space and causation, and not with reference to the Atman which transcends the three periods of time. Thus one should meditate on the Atman as free of everything other to it, in all the three periods of time. Here we once again quote Srimad-Bhaga- vatam which puts this great Truth in a simple verse (II-ix-32) which states: "ahamevasamevagre nanyad yat sadasat param; paschad-aham yadetascha yo-avasishyeta so'smy-aham-I, the absolute alone was in the beginning before creation, nothing else was, neither existence nor non-existence; and after creation I, the Absolute alone continues as such; and I, the Absolute alone will be after dissolution."

The word 'this' (idam) in the mantra refers to this phenomenal world that appears to be real to the senses and the mind in the present

condition of ignorance of the truth. The Absolute willed or thought 'let me create these worlds'. Does the Absolute think like us? Has he also got a mind like us? Why and what and how would He think when He is 'the all'? To discriminating people this world is full of pains. Why should He create such a painful world? He is said to be Bliss, Infinite. Then why He willed to become this misery and pain? Will a happy one ever wish to suffer? All these and many more such questions will arise in the mind of the seeker who starts meditation seriously. They have to be answered satisfactorily.

Let us see how He created the worlds. The Upanishad says that He first created heaven, sky and earth and then their protectors. He first became virat in the human form. His mouth emerged and from the mouth emerged speech and from speech agni, the fire-god. Then the nostrils parted in that virat purusha. From the nostrils emerged the sense of smell and from the sense of smell vayu the air-god emerged. Similarly, with His other organs, the organs came first, followed by their corresponding objects and then presiding deities. These deities were subjected to hunger and thirst. Then they wanted an abode. It is said that gods were not satisfied with the bodies of cow, horse and other animals for their abodes, but were very happy and fully satisfied when man was created. The gods now entered into the man-fire-god entered into speech assuming the form of the organ of speech, then the air-god entered into the nostrils assuming the form of the sense of smell, and so on with the remaining gods. Then hunger and thirst wanted an abode. To them He said: "You being only feelings, you cannot possibly enjoy food without being supported by some conscious being; I therefore assign your livelihood by sharing among the gods". Now, He created food which is to be taken up by apana. Having created all this, He Himself entered through vidrti, the opening which He made at the head. He resides in three abodes which are the right eye, the mind and the heart, during the states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep all of which are said to be dream, because He is

perceiving unreal things alone in all the three states. He identifies himself with all objects and suffers transmigration. Then He is called the individual jiva. He realises the purusha as Brahman, the Great, tatatamam, the most pervasive, the fullest like space, nay more pervasive and full than space as He is said to extend beyond space also. 'I have realised this (idam) Brahman that is my Self and the Self of all'-this was what he realised. There- fore He is to be meditated through the name idandra. indra is an indirct name for Him for conventional dealings.

Starting with the will of the Universal to become the many and ending with His entry into the individual through the head-all that is said to be isvara-srishti creation of the Lord. From the time of assertion of individuality by the jiva, until he is liberated-all that is is said to be jiva-srishti, the creation of the jiva. This division of isvara- srishti and jiva-srishti, is made only for the sake of expla- nation. Really both are isvara-srishti. Both bondage and liberation experienced by the jiva are dream-like, because the whole creation has come out of the thought of the Supreme, as it were.

The hunger and thirst of the gods referred to in the Upanishad, who have fallen, as it were, into samsara, be- cause of their separation from the Supreme, are not merely, the desire to take food and drink water. They indiciate all the desires of the individual, craving for objective experience. On the whole, they symbolise the restlessness of the jiva and his intense desire to get back to the original source from which it has, as though, been separated. It is like a drop of water in the middle of the ocean which somehow thinking that it is a separate entity, very small in size tossed here and there, desiring and craving for union with the majestic ocean. There is no actual separation of the drop from the ocean. The separation is only imaginary and this wrong imagination is to be removed by right know- ledge. No physical action is involved in the process of a drop regaining its original position as the ocean. Similar is the case with the individual jiva. What happens in the

waking state-the bifurcation as subject and object and the further ramification--all that is like what happens in dream.

There seems to be some difference between the universal and the individual. In the universal, the organs like mouth, eye, etc., appeared first, then their functions such as speech, sight, etc., emerged and thereafter the presiding deities such as agni, sun and others manifested themselves. But in the individual, there seems to be a reversal in the whole pro- cess. The presiding deities such as agni, sun, etc., entered into the body as speech, sight, etc., and found the mouth, the eye and the other organs as the abode. So, the gods are the controllers in the individual, while in the universal they are the controlled, the controller being the Supreme Being. The effect in the universal appears as the cause in the individual. So jiva seems to be different from isvara. Just as a reflection in water is topsy turvy, that in a mirror also is reversed, the right side appearing as the left, even so is the case with the jiva, and therefore, they say the jiva and for that matter the whole universe, is a reflection, as it were, of the Supreme Being. What is the reflecting surface here? It is also the Supreme Being. So, that which appears as the reflection, viz., the world is also the Supreme Being alone in essence. Just as there is really nothing inside the mirror other to the mirror, there is no such thing as the world in the Supreme Being, the pure consciousness other to It.

One may put the question how can the Supreme reflect in itself? Then the scriptures say: "all right, if you say that is not possible, then we say that the Supreme is reflected in maya or ignorance." What is the nature of maya? Where from has it come? The reply is that it is anirvachaniya, indescribable. No satisfactory logical answer can be given. maya is posited to solve the problem of creation. It is like the 'brought in arithmetical problems to find out the ans-wer. This 'x' is not in the question and it will not appear in the answer. Appearing in the middle, it helps to solve the problem and get the correct answer. After helping the student to get the answer, the 'x' disappears. Even

so, say the scriptures, this inscrutable maya, which is not in the Supreme Being, helps the individual jiva to solve the mystery of life, and to get out of this wheel of samsara, and finally the maya disappears. The etymological meaning of the word maya is given as 'that which is not'. It is also said to be the illusory power of the Supreme Being. What this non- existent maya does, is beautifully described in the follow- ing five verses by the great Acharya Sankara:

1. nirupamanitya niramsake'pykhande

mayi chiti sarva-vikalpanadi-sunye,

ghatayati jagadisa-jivabhedam

tvaghatita-ghatana-patiyasi maya.

maya is extremely clever in bringing about apparent reconcilation between seemingly thoroughly irreconcilables. It reconciles the presence of the jiva, the world and God as three different entities in "Me" who is matchless, in- comparable, eternal, without parts, free of differentiation such as cause, effect and the like, and who is of the very nature of homogeneous and uninterrupted Consciousness.

2. srutisata-nigamanta-sodhakana-

pyahaha dhanadi-nidarsanena sadyah,

kalushayati chatushpadadyabhinnan-

aghatita-ghatana-patiyasi maya.

Oh! How wonderful is maya which is dexterous in making the apparently impossible seem possible! Even those highly learned who are versed in hundreds of Vedantic texts and who have examined their imports, are lured with the bait of wealth and sense objects, which immediately make their mind turbid and hurl them down to the level of beasts.

3. sukhachid-akhanda-vibodham-advitiyam

viyadanaladi vinirmite niyojya, bhramayati bhava-sagare nitantam

tvaghatita-ghatana-patiyasi maya. maya which is very clever in uniting those which cannot be united,
effects an apparent union of that non-dual, un- interrupted Knowledge-Bliss with the ephemeral body, organs, mind, intellect and the ego constituted of the five great ele- ments, viz., ether, air, fire, water and earth and causes it to whirl, as it were, in the ocean of transmigration. 4. apagata-gunavarna jatibhede

sukhachiti vipravitadyahamkritim cha,

sphutayati suta-dara-geha-moham

tvaghatita-ghatana-patiyasi maya.

maya which is very able to make the unreal appear as real, creates in the non-dual Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute which is completely free of all differences like qualities, colours, birth etc., the difference of varnas like brahmana, ksha- triya and sudra, and also attachment to son, wife, house and the like and creates complete delusion.

5. vidhi-hari-hara bhedam-apyakhande

bata virachayya budhanapi prakamam,

bhramayati hari-hara-vibheda-bhavan-

aghatita-ghatana-patiyasi maya.

Ah! What a marvel! maya which is dexterous in making the false appear as true, having created the false appearance of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in the one non- dual, homogeneous Brahman, embarasses even the highly learned and makes them roam about, deluded with the idea of difference among the Trinities.

Another analogy given by the wise to know the real nature of jiva and the world, is that of knots in a long thread. Imagine a long thread with

several knots in it. Are the knots different from the thread? No, they are thread itself. The knots do not cease to be the thread when they are remaining as knots. Suppose the knots think themselves as separate from the thread. This is the 'bondage' of the thread. Knowing that they are the thread alone, whether they remain as knots tied up or thread with the knots untied, is the 'liberation' of the thread. Even so is the case of jiva who is Brahman himself. Thinking that he is a separate individual is bondage and knowing that he is Brahman always is liberation. Hence, the wise say that mind alone is the cause for both, bondage and liberation. The mind which is attached to sense objects is bound, while the mind which is freed from attachment is liberated. The mind and the objects are really the pure Consciousness alone.

This meditation results in the mergence of the individuality in universality and finally in the non-dual Consciousness. In all meditations the mind moves, as it were, from this body in which it appears to be located to the object meditated upon and finally releases itself both from this body and the object and becomes one with the transcendental Consciousness which is neither the meditator nor the meditation nor the meditated and yet is the all.

37. VAMADEVA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION PRACTISED BY VAMADEVA)

In mantra II-1-v of the Aitareya-upanishad there is this declaration of sage Vamadeva: "garbhe nu sannan- veshama-vedam-aham devanam janimani visva, satam ma pura ayasira-rakshan-nadhah syeno javasa niradiyamiti. garbha evaitacchayano vamadeva evam-uvacha-Even while remaining in the womb of my mother, I had the knowledge of all the births of these gods, such as agni, vayu and others. A hundred fortresses made of iron kept me guarded in the lower worlds. I forced my way through by dint of the know- ledge of the Self, like a hawk caught in a net forcefully tears it and flys high up in the sky". Vamadeva said this while still lying in the womb of his mother. This mantra occurs also in Rigveda IV-xxvii-1.

The Atmapurana in its section on the Aitareya-upanishad gives some details on this knowledge attained by Vamadeva. Vamadeva and a few others who were learned in the scriptures and had all the fourfold qualifications (discrimination, dispassion, all virtues and intense aspiration for Liberation) required of spiritual seekers, heard from the seers, Sanaka, Sanandana and others, that knowledge of the Supreme Brahman alone could give them liberation from the trammels of samsara. All of them were trying their best to attain that knowledge by the method of sravana, manana and nididhyasana-hearing, reflection, and deep meditation. While thus practising brahma-vidya, Vamadeva died before attaining direct realisation of the Truth. He had only a trace of ignorance in him. He, therefore, entered into the womb of the mother for taking the next birth. During the nineth month, while remaining inside the womb, he remembered the spiritual practices of his previous life. The remnant of ignorance in him was so little that it was washed off by the sufferings undergone during the eight months in the womb of the mother, and the knowledge of the Truth revealed itself. While remaining in the womb of the mother he gave expression to his direct experience of the Truth to his co-seekers. He said: "O my

dear friends, all of you know that I, Vamadeva was practising sadhana along with you in my previous life. Then I had the feeling 'I am the body'. Now, as a result of my practices in that birth, that identification with the body has gone. I now do not see anything but the Self. I fill all the directions. I pervade the whole space. All the manus, all the suns in the past were none other than me. isvara is also I myself. The protectors of the world and their lords are non-different from me. I am the four kinds of living beings (those born from wombs, those from earth, those from eggs and those from sweat). Right from Brahma down to the inanimate objects in the world, all are none other than 'I', the embodiment of Bliss. Birth and death, growth and change, decay and death-all these transformations belong to the body. I do not have any of these. The body with the above six transformations can never be my Self. I know the birth of all the organs and their presiding deities. None of them can make me either happy or unhappy. I have directly realised the Self now. I have known that I am the witness of all. 'I' who is now the Infinite cannot be touched even by the gods, like agni, vayu and the rest. I myself created several bodies similar to iron prisons, as one creates a snake in a rope, which were the causes of bondage. Through the knowledge of Brahman, I have escaped out of that self-made, unreal prison by disidentifying myself from the body. It is like a hawk with a strong beak kept in a cage, breaking open the cage with its beak and escaping out into the open space. In my previous birth, sages like Sanaka and others instructed all of us that dispassion is a help to the dawn of knowledge. Now, I have realised the truth of their statement. By their grace I have attained the Supreme knowledge. When we were enquiring into the truth, I happened to die and I entered into the womb of this woman, now my mother, because of the little trace of ignorance that remained in me. Now that that trace of ignorance also is gone, I have attained the knowledge of the Self. All of you have enquired into the nature of Brahman. But the obstructions have not been completely removed, Now, I and hence, brahma-jnana has not dawned in you. am not afraid

of samsara,-repeated birth, life and death. All these are superimposed or imagined by Me on Me, like the snake superimposed on a rope. I am the Atman of birth and death also. So what can birth and death do with me! Will this death kill itself? Never. Deep sleep is with reference to the mind, for in that state mind is merged in the Self. Dream is with reference to the organs for then they are merged in the mind. Waking is with re- ference to the body which is active even as the dream body was active during the dream. None of the three states now affect me as I am neither the mind, nor the organs, nor the body. All of you, should continuously reflect on these and branch. truths and remove the remove the ignorance root Otherwise, you may also have to enter into the wombs to take future births. That should not happen. In my view, I have separated myself from the body, mind and organs. From your view, I may be undergoing untold sufferings in the womb of this mother. But the dawn of the full moon of brahma-jnana prevents the experience of the heat of suffering inside the womb."

Vamadeva at the end of the tenth month was born into this world. Like his gurus Sanaka and others, he spent the rest of his life in the new body as a jivanmukta, liberated Soul without the least desire for the sense pleasures of this world and the higher worlds and exhausted his prarabdha-karma as a non-doer and non-enjoyer at the same time as the maha-karta, the all-doer and maha- bhokta, the all-enjoyer.

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra I-iv-10 cites the statement of Sage Vamadeva: "tat-ha etat pasyan rishih vamadevah pratipate aham manuh abhavam suryah cha iti- The sage named Vamadeva knowing his own Self as identical with Brahman, visualised these mantras: 'I was Manu and the Sun etc'." The full mantras occur in Rigveda. The English translation of the mantras by Ralph T.H. Griffith is given below:

1. I was aforetime Manu, I was Surya, I am the sage kakshivan holy singer,

Kutsa the son of Arjuni I master, I am the sapient Usana, behold me.

2. I have bestowed the earth upon the Arya and rain upon the man who brings oblation,

I guided forth the loudly roaring waters and the gods moved according to my pleasure.

3. In the wild joy of Soma I demolished sambara's forts ninety and nine, together,

And utterly the hundreadth habitation when helping Divodasa Atithigva.

Anyone who meditates on these lines as indicated by Vamadeva, will also attain the state of Liberation, the one- ness with the whole universe.

38. PRAJNANAM-BRAHMA MAHAVAKYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE GREAT DECLARATION 'CONSCIOUSNESS IS BRAHMAN')

This great declaration, the maha-vakya prajnanam- brahma-Consciousness is Brahman is said to be the lakshana-vakya, the sentence which states the nature of Brahman as the pure Consciousness. Some call it svarupa vakya, the sentence expressing the knowledge of one's own Self which is nothing but pure Consciousness. This occurs in the last but one mantra, in chapter III of the Aitareya- upanishad. In the first two mantras of this third chapter, the Upanishad speaks of prana, inferior Brahman Brahman with attributes diversified into the heart and mind. It is sentience, rulership, secular knowledge, stead- fastness, memory, suffering, life activities, desire, passion and such others. All these are to be meditated as the different names of Consciousness alone. The prajna which is intellect as well as mind and combination of the organs, the inferior form of Brahman, has as though entered this body through the feet. The superior form which is worthy of worship by the wise, the witness-Self has entered the body through the crown of the head. The inferior or conditioned Brahman, hiranyagarbha is again described in mantra 3 as Indra, Prajapati, all the gods, the five elements and all beings.

All these beings have Consciousness as the giver of their reality, their very existence, and they are impelled by Consciousness. The whole universe has Consciousness as its 'eye', the instrument of cognition. On Consciousness is established all this. Consciousness is the support of the whole universe and, therefore, It is Brahman, the Supreme. The inferior or conditioned Brahman when freed from all distinctions created by limiting adjuncts, through the process of noti, neti in meditation, reveals itself as the unconditioned Absolute who is again the antaryamin, the inner Controller in the meditator and in all beings and be-sides whom there is nothing. Then one realises that it is the Absolute that has expressed Itself by assuming the names of isvara,

hiranyagarbha, virat and this universe of ump- teen objects and concepts.

The Upanishad in the last mantra (III-4) says that through this Self that is Consciousness, sage Vamadeva ascended higher up from this world after becoming desire- less, and attained that Reality, the Absolute which is age- less, deathless, immortal, fearless, omniscient, free from cause and effect, as also inside and outside and which is of the nature of unalloyed ambrosia of pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The sage became merged with the Absolute, even as in a lamp blown out, the fire in the lamp which existed manifesting itself as limited and separate, becomes one with the universal fire in its unmanifested, cosmic, formless form. The river when it joins the ocean loses its individuality and becomes the ocean. Even so, one who meditates on this mahavakya, prajnanam brahma in the manner pointed out in the Upanishad, becomes Brahman, the Absolute. His individual intellect gets dissolved in the Absolute. He is now no more a brahmavit, a knower of Brahman, but Brahman Itself-says Acharya Sankara while describing the final consummation of meditation on the Absolute, in the last verse of his quintuplet known as manishapanchakam. He adds that the holy feet of that rare soul is worthy of worship by even the king of the celestials, the ruler of the three worlds.

The experience of one who reaches this most sublime state is indescribable. Even as the Supreme is beyond speech and thought, the condition of one who realises the Supreme as non-different from oneself, is also beyond the realm of the speech and the mind. The non-dual state is some times described as homogeneous, for want of better words. It is not the homogeneity that we generally under- stand through our individual intellect like, say, the homo- geneity in the ocean, air, or even the ether. The best and the nearest experience is the homogeneity that is experienced in deep sleep. To the one who meditates on this mahavakya and reaches its culmination, all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep merge in that state- less State

which is given the name turiya, the fourth, or sometimes turiyatita, that which transcends 'the fourth'. Till one reaches that, the deep sleep state will also be a state of ignorance like the other two states of waking and dream, with this difference, viz., that in the former (deep sleep state) there is only avarana, the veiling of the Reality, resulting in the unconsciousness of the presence of the world, while in the latter (waking and dream state) there are both the avarana and vikshepa, the veiling of the Reality along with the projection of this world phenomena. avarana and vikshepa are two aspects of ajnana, the primal nescience. When one realises through direct experience that Supreme which is free of the triad of experiencer, experience and the experienced, one simultaneously realises that this primal nescience, which is said to be the seed of the uni- verse, which is unmanifested, is nothing but an unreal superimposition on the Pure Consciousness. In that state one is fully aware of the absence of a world other to one- self. The Paingala-upanishad reveals this great secret, when it says: "In the beginning there was only the sat which was sat-chit-ananda, the infinite, eternally free, one and non-dual. Even as in the mirage, the pearl-oyster, a stump of a tree and a piece of crystal, there is respectively the manifestation of water, silver, a man and streaks of light, there is in that Supreme Absolute that which is known as the anirvachaniya, mula-prakriti, the state of equipoise of the three gunas, (sattva, rajas and tamas). The reflection thereof is the sakshi-chaitanya-Witness-consciousness. The whole universe starting from isvara on- wards is a further projection". This shows that the only Reality is Brahman who has expressed himself as the phenomenal Universe of multiplicity and variety including the relatively real and unreal.

The analogy of the blown out flame of a lamp to ex- plain the nature of peace and quiescence in that supreme state, is likely to cause a doubt whether one's Self also would not cease to exist, and if so, all spiritual sadhana would end in self-annihilation. This doubt has been

raised and cleared by the Upanishadic seers themselves. In the Kathopanishad, Nachiketas puts the question to the Lord of Death: "O Lord, this doubt arises whether consequent on the death of all phenomenality, the Reality exists or not." The Upanishad clears the doubt saying that It, the Self, is first to be realised as 'existing' and then as It really is in Its transcendental aspect (Ka. Up. 1-1-xx and II-3-xiii). In the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad Maitreyi raises the same doubt and asks Yajnavalkya: "O venerable Lord, just here you have confounded me. How can the individual cease to exist on the final realisation of the Supreme? If the Self also ceases to exist, then to whom is this realisation?" And Yajnavalkya replies that this Self is really imperishable and indestructible. That is to say, It is not subject to destruction either in the form of change or of extinction. The sense of individuality and separateness alone ceases. Only when there is the apparent duality, there is the function of the senses and it is said one smells something other to the Self, tastes something other to the Self, knows something other to the Self, and so on. But to the Knower of Brahman everything is the Self. The smeller, smelling and the smelt are the Self alone. So is the case with the other senses, their objects and experiences. Therefore, in his case there is no question of any kind of limited experience through the senses and the mind, different from the Self as in the case of the ignorant. Who is there to understand That by which everything else is understood, and through what can That be understood (Br. Up. IV-iv-14 and 15)!

This 'Entity', the one and non-dual, when freed of all distinctions created by the limiting adjuncts is without name, form, action and the result thereof. It is to be realised as that which is beyond all thoughts and words by eliminating, through the purified intellect, all attributes as also their absence. That is given the name 'Pure Consciousness' or 'Pure Awareness-prajnanam'. That is God, the omniscient, in His manifested and unmanifested forms and also the Indweller in all and the Controller of all. Identifying Himself with cosmic intellect, mind

and vital force, He assumes the name of hiranyagarbha. When He identifies Himself with the gross universe, He is known as virat. The same Entity assumes the forms of the various gods and be- comes known as agni, varuna, indra, rama, krishna and others, the demons such as ravana, kamsa etc., the human, superhuman and sub-human beings, the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, in short the whole cosmos consist- ing of billions of solar systems and universes. In other words, what we perceive through the senses and the mind and what is beyond them is He alone. Right from isvara down to the clump of grass, a particle of sand, the invisible atom and its further subdivisions, are verily He Himself.

If Consciousness is Brahman, what is unconsciousness? Is it outside Brahman? Then Brahman would lose its nature of infinity. To this question, it is replied that there cannot be such a thing as complete unconsciousness. One can be unconscious of objects. But one can never, by any stretch of imagination, think of unconsciousness by itself. Because consciousness is necessary to think or posit unconscious- ness. Without consciousness, there can neither be consciousness of objects or pure unconsciousness. Thus, Consciousness-Absolute is eternal and is the same as Existence-Absolute which is Bliss-Absolute and is given the name as Brahman-Atman, to help meditation.

The intention in this meditation, as in all similar meditations prescribed in the Upanishads, is not to think of any object or concept. great or small, gross or subtle, not even causal, but to go beyond the subject, object and relation between the two.

A sage once gave an apt illustration to drive home this important point, on his devotees, which is likely to be forgotten in their zeal and attachment to meditation. The doctor gives injections to his patients. He does it not with the purpose of piercing them with a sharp needle, although in injecting the medicines, he does pierce them with his needle. His intention is only to administer medicine into their system

in order to cure the disease. Similarly, the sages and scriptures prescribe meditation not to go on thinking of the object of meditation, even if it be isvara, hiranyagarbha or virat. Though in the early stages all meditation starts with the mental concepts such as the meditator, the process of meditating and the object of meditation, one has to transcend all the three, then what remains or what happens is indescribable in words. The most wonderful and inexplicable part of this mysterious 'achievement' is that it is not a result or effect of any practice, not even meditation, though all spiritual practices including meditation are absolutely necessary. Then how it happens? Somehow ithappens; that is all, perhaps nothing happens.

SECTION-IX

CHHANDOGYA-UPANISHAD

39. UDGITHA-VIDYA-1

(MEDITATION ON THE UDGITHA-1)

This meditation is enjoined in the Chandogya-upanishad at its very commencement. It occurs as the first mantra in the first section of the first chapter. It runs as follows: "om-iti-etat-aksharam-utgitham-upasita, om-itihi-udgayati- One should meditate on this syllable om which is the udgitha, for one sings the udgitha beginning with om".

Those who are proficient in the vedas say that the sama- veda consists of a fixed number of groups of mantras chanted melodiously. Each such group is called a saman which is divided into either five or seven divisions called bhakti-s. udgitha is one such bhakti in both the divisions. It is sung in sacrificial occasions by the udgatr priest. The syllable om with which the priest starts singing udgitha, is identi- fied with the udgitha. Here, the meditation is a part of the sacrifice.

Acharya Sankara says that generally the syllable om is considered as the best epithet for the supreme Brahman, for Paramatman is propitiated best by the use of this syllable om, even as in this world, people become happy and elated when they are called by their names which are dear to them. But here, he adds, that the syllable om does not have that connotation. It means udgitha and it is a sound symbol for the Supreme, just as an idol or a picture is a symbol for Lord Vishnu, Siva, etc.

Thus om the syllable serves in two ways. It is the name of the Supreme, and it is also a symbol for meditation. This is made clear in other Upanishads also. The Katha-upani- shad says: "This letter om indeed is hiranyagarbha and also the supreme Brahman. This medium (alam-banam) is the best, this medium is the supreme Brahman' (1-2-xvi and xvii). The Taittiriya-upanishad says: "om is Brahman.....They commence singing samas with om The wise when about to recite the vedas utter om" (I-8-i). The Bhagavad-gita also refers to this in verses VIII-12 and 13. It is stated therein: "Having closed all the gates, having

confined the mind in the heart, having fixed the prana in the head, engaged in yoga, uttering Brahman, the one-syllabled om thinking of Me-he who departs leaving the body. he reaches the Supreme Goal". Verse XVII-23 says: "om-tat-sat-this has been taught to be the triple designation of Brahman'

What exactly this first mantra of the Chhandogya- upanishad signifies? This is taken up, discussed and the final conclusion arrived at in the Brahma Sutras under the topic, vyaptiadhikaranam-specification of om (vide sutra III-3-ix). To the scholars and also the spiritual aspirants the mantra by the nature of the construction of the sentence, is likely to give rise to doubts as to its exact significance. According to the commentator Sri Sankaracharya, there are four possible alternative interpretations: (1) It may be that either the idea of udgitha is superimposed here on om or the syllable om is superimposed on udgitha; (2) it may be that either the idea of the syllable om is sublated by the idea of udgitha, or the otherway, the idea of udgitha is sublated by the idea of the syllable om; (3) it may be that both are identical terms or synonyms; or (4) it may be that word udgitha qualifies the word om; thus udgitha is an adjective to the substantive which is om and thus it may mean meditate on om that is the udgitha. It is like the usage in the sentence 'bring the pot that is white'. After much discussion, the last interpretation is accepted as the correct one, and the first three are ruled out as they do not fit in the context. The syllable om is thus qualified by the term udgitha in this mantra. The udgitha starts with om. Hence it is said 'om which is the udgitha'. 'Because om extends over the whole of the Vedas, to specialise it by the term udgitha is appropriate'-this is how Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj translates the sutra.

mantras 2 to 10 in this section enjoin as to how to practise this meditation, what are its glories, greatness, what are the fruits that the meditator will get, etc.

This is how one should meditate: The essence of all being is earth, as the cause for birth, existence and dissolution of all beings is this earth. What is the essence of earth? It is water, as earth and water are interwoven like warp and woof. The essence of water is herbs or vegetation, as the latter is a modification of the former. The essence of vegetation is man, as he lives on vegetation directly or indirectly. The essence of man is speech as it is his most superior faculty. The essence of speech is rik as the rik-mantras are superior to all that is chanted through the organ of speech. of speech. The essence of the rik-mantras is saman, as when the latter is chanted in musical tone, it is more pleasing than the chanting of the former. And finally the essence of the sama-mantras is udgitha. Thus the udgitha coming as it does as the eighth in the above series of essences and being the essence of all the essences, is worthy of worship and devotion, and deserves to be treated as the best symbol of the Supreme.

The instruction on meditation continues. rik is vak (speech), sama is prana, (the vital force) and udgitha is om (the syllable). Speech and vital force, the rik and sama, are the two couples. Speech and vital force are the source, the birth place of rik and sama. The two couples are not The couple, i.e., the speech and vital force is different. The couple, contained in the syllable om.

He who knows the esoteric truth of this couple, the identity of rik and sama, and vak and prana, i.e., he who meditates on udgitha as the letter om and realises the mystery behind this, fulfils all his desires, even as in the world a couple fulfils their desires, in their union. One who meditates on this couple with the knowledge of the significance and meaning, certainly gets all he wants. also becomes the cause of increasing happiness. He who meditates without knowing the meaning and the mystery behind this couple, also gets the benefit of meditation. His meditation also will not go in vain, says the Upanishad. But meditation with the knowledge will be more efficacious and will bring in the result more quickly than the meditation without the

knowledge. The Upanishad here tries to remove the wrong notion prevalent among some people that, chanting of mantras and performance of rituals without knowing the meaning of the mantras is utterly useless.

This meditation is continued in section 4, chapter I, which starts with the same mantra om-iti-etat-aksharam-udgitham- upasita, om iti hi-utgayati. The celestials or gods thought that by doing the ritualistic karmas prescribed in the three Vedas, they could avoid the fear of death. But the demons in the form of death, saw them and thought of conquer- ing them through karmas, as a fisherman looks at the fishes in shallow waters with the thought of catching them through some means. Because the celestials having been purified by their performance of the Vedic rituals, were able to discern the intention of death, they refrained from the performance of karmas and started upasana, meditation on the svara, the om which is the udgitha which is chanted at the very outset before starting the chanting of the three Vedas. They meditated on om which is immortal and fear- less and they therefore became immortal and fearless. Any one who thus meditates on om as immortal and fearless, will also attain the same result like the gods.

40. UDGITHA-VIDYA-2

(MEDITATION ON THE UDGITHA-2)

The instruction on this meditation contained in sections 2 and 3 of chapter I of the Chhandogya-upanishad is given through the story of the war between the celestials and the demons and the success of the former through the chanting of the udgitha. The story is almost similar to the one in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad chapter I, section 3. Here, in the Chhandogya-upanishad, the meditation is on the udgitha identified with prana. The war is that which is going on eternally between the extroverted senses symbolised as demons and the introverted senses as celstials. The celestials thought that they could defeat the demons through the performance of the rites of the udgatr priests. They performed the rite combined with meditation on the udgitha as the deity presiding over the nose, the sense of smell and thus tried to effect unity among them, so that they will get power to destroy the demons. The demons, coming to know of the intention of the celestials determined to defeat their purpose. They, it is said, pierced it, as it were, with the evil of diversity. It means that the sense of smell be- coming puffed up with pride that it smelt sweet odour had its like for it and the dislike for the bad odour. A difference was created and there arose a pair of opposites as good smell and bad smell. This is the reason why even now people who are ignorant of the oneness of their Self with the organ of smell in the individual and its presiding deity in the universal, like good smell and hate bad smell, thus creating another pair of opposites viz., like and dislike which in turn creates other pairs of opposites such as attachment and hatred, sin and merit, heaven and hell, etc. Then the celestials meditated on the deities presiding over speech, eye, ear, mind, and the other organs as udgitha. But, in all these cases also they could not succeed, for the demons pierced them, as it were, with evil as they did in the case of smell. Lastly they meditated on the udgitha as the mukhya-prana, the chief vital force. This prana being all pervasive and free of the defects

of the senses, the demons could not pierce it with evil. For there is no feeling of individual separateness and the feeling of raga- dvesha, like and dislike in the all pervasive prana. The demons were defeated and thrown helter-skelter, even as a dry clod of soft clay gets itself smashed when it strikes against a hard rock. All the senses are kept intact capable of discharging their functions, by this chief prana, because the food and drink through which they live. Are taken in and digested by this prana. Thus should one meditate on the udgitha- prana, with reference to the parts of ones own body (adhyatmam).

The same meditation with reference to the deities, is also to be practised by the meditator. This is adhidaivatam. The udgitha is to be meditated as the sun itself. Even as the sun seems to rise and sing aloud through his brilliant rays of heat and light for the sake of living beings, the priest udgatr also intones the udgitha for the sake of his master, the sacrificer with his family and for his own sake. The sunrise causes the destruction of the darkness of the night and the fear in the beings which they experience at night. Even so, the aspirant who meditates on the udgitha as the sun, is freed of fear of transmigration, the life of birth and death in this world and its cause which is ajnana, nescience.

Though it may, at first sight, seem that there is difference between prana and the sun, because the prana is inside the body and the sun is in the sky high above, really there is no difference, because they have the same character- istic of producing heat. Further, there is similarity in their names, as prana is known as svara and the sun as pratya- svara. svara means that which goes and pratyasvara means that which comes. The name svara is appropriate to prana which appears to go at the time of death but does not appear to return, while the name pratyasvara well applies to the sun as every day he appears to go in the evening and come back in the morning.

The udgitha is to be meditated again as vyana which has here a special connotation different from what it has vyana here is to be considered

superior to in yoga books. prana and apana, since speech which is identified with vyana, saman and udgitha, function with vyana and not with prana and apana, for when one speaks and chants the Vedas, there is neither breathing in nor breathing out. Even so, actions requiring effort like churning the fire sticks for producing fire, aiming the arrow, walking, lift- ing weights, etc., are done with vyana, for in such actions breathing in and out stops for a while. Therefore udgitha should be meditated as vyana.

With reference to the letters or syllables constituting the word udgitha, viz., ut, gi and tha, one should meditate on ut as prana, gi as speech, and tha as food. Meditation on letters of a word is the same as the meditation on the object signified by that word. Therefore, the meditation on the three letters means meditation on prana, speech and food. Similarly, the three letters are to be meditated as the heaven, the sky and the earth respectively, and then as the sun, air and fire respectively, and also as the rig- veda, yajurveda and samaveda respectively.

Some tips are given to help meditation. One should reflect on the source of the saman, i.e., the rig-mantras that contain the saman, along with their presiding deities, the particular Seer (rishi) to whom the mantras were revealed, the metre in which they are sung, the direction that is connected with the deity, and lastly one's own individual self with one's name, gotra (lineage), etc., and his object of desire for which he has started this meditation. The chanting of the mantras should be free from defects such as mis-spelling, wrong intonation and want of clarity in the pronunciation of the syllables.

The sages Angiras, Ayasya and Brihaspati who meditated on the prana as udgitha, identified themselves with it and their very names signify this identification. The prana itself is given the names of angiras, being the essence of all limbs, ayasya as it goes out of the mouth and brihaspati as it is the Lord of speech which is great. It is said that one Baka, the son of Dalbha also practised this meditation. He, therefore,

became the udgatr priest of the sacrificers dwelling in Naimisa, and was able to fulfil all their desires in the great sacrifice called satra. His ability to do it was due to the identification with prana through this meditation. Any one who knows this vidya and practises the meditation, will get the visible result of fulfilment of all desires and the invisible result of identification with the cosmic prana, hiranyagarbha which results in gradual liberation.

41. UDGITHA-VIDYA-3

(MEDITATION ON UDGITHA-3)

This vidya is contained in the fifth section of chapter I of the Chhandogya-upanishad. It instructs on the meditation on the udgitha which is pranava, and pranava which is udgitha, as identical with the yonder sun which is moving always with the sound of or as it were.

The Upanishad says that sage Kaushitaki said to his only son: "I meditated on the sun as identical with his rays, i.e., I meditated thinking that the sun and his rays are one, and therefore, I begot you, my only son". So, it is enjoined that those who are desirous to have more than one son, should meditate on the sun and his rays as different. This is the adhidaivika aspect of the meditation. In the adhyatmika aspect, the Upani- shad says that by the meditation on the udgitha as the vital breath, one begets one son, and by the meditation on the udgitha as many prangs, i.e., as manifested in the different organs, one begets many sons. By meditation on that which is udgitha as verily the pranava, and that which is pranava as verily the udgitha, one rectifies all the defects such as wrong intonation, absence of clarity in the pronunciation of the words and the like, during the performance of ritualistic sacrifices with or without meditation.

Now, many may think in this and similar meditations, the result promised is not the highest and it comes under what we call mundane or earthly, as against the supramundane or spiritual enlightenment promised in some other vidyas. But such meditations are also helpful and can lead to the highest perhaps indirectly and not directly, for the result always depends on the bhava, the inner feeling and sraddha, unshaken faith one has on the ultimate goal. It does not depend upon the 'object' of meditation.

The inhabitants of a certain village in the western Himalayas were once affected by draught and poverty. Many of them started to cut

the trees and take the firewood to the distant town, sell them and thus earn their meagre livelihood. When they were moving in the forests and hills, some times some found sandal wood trees, the stems of which fetched high prices. Some others got rare edible fruits. A few got some precious stones. The unfortunate ones could not get anything but firewood. Those who got precious stones were freed of their poverty and misery. But one day, one among them found the philosopher's stone which had the power to fulfil the desires and wishes of all. With the help of that all the people in the village were able to get whatever they wanted and thus lived happily.

Here, the people were looking for firewood but got the philosopher's stone. The people in the story are the people of this globe. Their poverty is the ignorance, the cause of all pain and sorrow. The forest in this parable stands for the spiritual preceptor and the scriptures. The people of the village are these spiritual aspirants who approach the scripture and preceptors, practise the meditation pre- scribed. Some of them get mundane results, some get heavenly worlds and some, may be rare ones, get the ulti- mate goal of Self-realisation, depending upon their self-effort in the form of spiritual sadhana coupled with the grace of the guru and God.

42. UDGITHA-VIDYA-4

(MEDITATION ON UDGITHA-4)

This meditation on the udgitha, as given in sections 6 and 7 of the first chapter of the Chhandogya-upanishad, is productive of the fulfilment of all desires of the meditator. Here, one should meditate the rik, the mantras in the Rigveda as earth and the sama the mantras in the Sama- veda as fire. Just as sama is resting over rik, fire is resting over earth. Even as rik and sama are nondifferent, earth and fire are not quite different. How? What is signified by the syllable sa in sama is this earth alone. The other syllable ama is fire. Therefore, both the earth and fire can be sig- nified by the one word sama. The earth is to be meditated as the first half of sama and the fire as the second half. Hence, both are sama and they are not different. Just as rik and sama always go together, earth and fire always remain together. Therefore, earth and fire are rik and sama. Thus should one meditate.

Similarly, one should meditate on rik as the sky and sama as the air; rik as the heaven and sama as the sun; and rik as the stars and sama as the moon. Then one should meditate on rik as the white rays of the sun and sama as the blue that is extremely dark (the blackness in the sun, it is said, is seen by those who have got good concentration), and sa as the white light of the sun and ama as the black colour.

Having enjoined as above, the Upanishad describes, to help meditation, the divine nature of the purusha, the supreme person in the sun. The purusha is described as shinning like gold, seen within the sun, with golden beard and golden hair and exceedingly effulgent even to the very tips of his nails. His eyes are bright like a red lotus. His name is ut. rik and sama are to be meditated as his two joints. The priest who sings the ut is called udgata. This deity as described above, should be meditated as the Lord of all the worlds and all desires including those of the gods. So far the description is in regard to the adhidaivika aspect-the divine plane.

In the adhyatmika aspect, i.e., with reference to this body, the individual plane, the supreme Person should be meditated thus: Speech is rike and prana is sama. Speech is sa and prana is ama and that makes sama. The eye is rik and the self reflected in the eye is sama. is sama. The The eye is sa and the Self is ama which together makes sama. The ear is rik and the mind is sama. The ear is sa and the mind is ama and they both make sama. The white light in the eye is rik and the blue light that is extremely dark is sama. Again they, i.e., the white light and the blue that is ex- tremely dark are sa and ama which make up sama. Now, the Person seen within the eye is to be meditated as rik, He is sama, He is uktha, He is yajus and He is the Vedas. This Person seen in the eye is that Person seen in the sun, and they are identical. The Person seen in the eye is the Lord of all the worlds below and of all human desires.

He who meditates thus and knows the deity of the udgitha and then sings the sama-mantras, really sings about the Person in the eye who is the same as the Person in the sun. He identifies with the deity of the sun and attains all the worlds beyond the sun and all the desired objects of gods. He also attains all the worlds below and all the objects of human desires, because of his identification with the Person in the eye who is the same as the Person in the sun.

43. UDGITHA-VIDYA-5

(MEDITATION ON THE UDGITHA-5)

Sections 8 and 9 of Chapter I of the Chhandogya- upanishad give yet another udgitha-vidya, meditation on the udgitha which is productive of progressively higher degrees of happiness. This meditation is imparted through a story. Once upon a time, there were among many others, three per- sons proficient in this meditation, in a particular country. Their names are given as Silaka, the son of Salavat, Chaiki-tayana belonging to the Dalbhya family and Pravahana, the son of Jivala. these were not the only Of course, adepts in this meditation, as there were others such as Ushasta, Janasruti, Kaikeya, etc. The instructions on this meditation are revealed in the discussion of Silaka and of the other two among themselves. Sri Acharya Sankara says that the Upanishad through this story, teaches in addition to the udgitha-vidya, that such discussions should be done by the spiritual aspirants of the same temperament follow- ing the same method, among themselves and they will be useful and beneficial to them, as through such discussions wrong notions will be removed and new truths revealed. The discussion starts with the question of Silaka which is addressed to Chaikitayana.

Silaka: What is the support for sama?

Chaikitayana:-svara, tunes; sama consists of svara and hence it is the support of sama, even as in the case of a pot made of clay consisting of clay alone, clay is said to be its support.

S:-What is the support for svara?

C:-prana, because one sings the various tunes through prana-sakti alone.

S:-What is the support for prana?

C:-Food, because prana is sustained by food alone.

S: What is the support for food? C:-Water, since all food is produced with water. S:—What is the support for water? C :—The heavenly world, because water in the form of rain comes down from that world.

S:—What is the support for the heavenly world?

C:—One cannot carry the sama beyond the heavenly world.

We locate the sama in the heaven, for sama is praised as heaven.

S:—In your view sama has no final support, as heaven is not the final support.

C:—I would like to know the final support of sama from you.

S:—Yes, I will tell you. It is earth, because the heaven is supported by the sacrifices, charities and such other karmas done in this earth. There is also a Vedic statement that earth is rathantara-sama.

Now at this stage, Pravahana the third among them, who was till now a silent listener of the questions and answers of the other two, joined the discussion and said: O Silaka, earth is not the final support for the sama, and it has a still superior support.

Silaka wanted to know that superior support from Pravahana. The latter said that the real ultimate support for sama is akasa. Here, akasa means not the elemental ether, but the Atman, the Absolute from whom all this is born, in whom all this exists, and into whom all this finally dissolves. It is udgitha which is progressively higher and better than all the rest and It is without an end.

It is said that this meditation on the udgitha was taught by Atidhanva, the son of Sunaka to Udarasandilya. The former after instructing this vidya said: As long as this knowledge continues among your descendants, their lives in this world and the next world would be

progressively higher and better than the lives of those who are devoid of this knowledge. Anyone who practises this meditation also will attain the same result,

44. (SAUVA) UDGITHA-VIDYA-6

(MEDITATION ON THE UDGITHA SEEN BY THE DOGS-6)

This vidya is contained in section 12 of chapter I of the Chhandogya-upanishad. 'sauva' means 'seen by the dogs'. This vidya also is given through a story. Once, Dalbhya Baka also known by the name of Maitreya Galva went out of his village in the afteroon to a lonely place for his daily study of the Vedas. This action of his was prompted by his desire for food. Before him, a white dog appeared and other dogs gatherd around it. They were sages who assumed the form of dogs in order to initiate him. Or they might be the deities of prana, speech and other organs. The commentator says that here what is to be understood reasonably is that following the chief prana, the other pranas such as speech, the eyes and the other organs which are the eaters of food, their respective objects, having been propitiated by the study of the Vedas by Dalbhya Baka, appeared before him in their own forms in order to help him. Otherwise this story would become meaningless. The other dogs addressed the white one and said: Revered Sir, please
obtain food for us by singing, we are hungry". The white dog said: "All of you meet me in the morning in this very same place." Singing of saman is to be done in the morning alone. Or it might be that the sun who is the giver of food, was not in their front in the afternoon and in the morning they would be facing the sun. Dalbhya Baka remained there anxiously awaiting the dawn of the sun next morning. At sunrise, all the dogs appeared there and they started moving in a circle, one dog catching hold of another's tail with its mouth. It was similar to the action of the priests in a sacrifice, where the adhvaryu, prastotr, pratihatr, udgatr and brahma, together with the sacrificer go round the sacred fire taking successively the hand of the next person and the udgatr priest singing the bahish-pavamana hymns. Then all the dogs sat down and chanted the sound him. They said: "om, let us eat; om, let us drink; om, may the sun, varuna, prajapati and savitr bring us

food here; O Lord of food, bring food here. Yea bring it here, om". This is the prayer to be chanted by the meditator, combined with this meditation.

No result is however stated in the Upanishad. The com- mentator also does not mention anything about it. Accord- ing to another Upanishadic declaration the result of medi- tation depends upon how upon how one meditates on Him. "Tam yatha yatha upasate tathaiva bhavati-one becomes just what one meditates Him to be" (Mudgala-Upanishad-3). Hence, one who meditates according to this sauva-udgitha- vidya attains plenty of food and drink.

Many may feel that they are not fit or qualified to enter into the spiritual path and practise meditation. They are honest to themselves in one sense. They know their several weaknesses in the form of lust, anger, jealousy, etc. Therefore they really feel that until they get over these shortcomings, they cannot even start the spiritual Sadhana. The wise say that such men are caught in the horns of a dilemma-to do Sadhana they should get over their negative qualities and to give up negative qualities they should do Sadhana. To them is told an interesting story. There was a poor man in a small village in a state ruled by a king. He was anxious that the king should visit his hut one day. But his condition was so poor that he could not make the necessary arrangements to receive and honour the royal guest befitting his status. He managed to communicate his desire to the king. The king whose only aim was to make his people happy, readily agreed. Knowing the poverty of the man, the king himself sent from his palace in advance all the articles required for his reception. The royal messengers went with the articles and requested the man to make use of them for the king's visit. They themselves helped him to clean the place, to make a good road up to the hut, to spread the carpet, to decorate the hut with fiags and festoons, etc, etc. After everything had been arranged by the king himself, he visited the hut and made the poor man happy. Similarly, if only we really want God

sincerely from the core of our heart, yearn for his darsan, He himself would clean our mind of all its dirt in the form of evil thoughts and habits and make it fit for his revelation and then reveal Himself. He is the bestower of not only mukti, liberation, but also bhukti, all kinds of enjoyments.

45. PRANA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE VITAL-FORCE)

In Brahma Sutra III-3-x, sarva-bhedad-anyatreme under the topic sarva-abhedadhikaranam, the unity of prana-vidya, sage Vyasa has laid down that this vidya or meditation occurring in the several Upanishads is the same and that the meditator who takes to the meditation on prana, the vital force has, therefore, to combine all the attributes of prana mentioned in the Chhandogya, the Brihadaranyaka and other Upanishads. The prana-vidyas occurring in the Prasna and the Kaushitaki-upanishads besides those in the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka, are dealt with here.

The Chhandogya-upanishad (V-1 and 2) and the Brihad- aranyaka-upanishad (VI-1) give to prana the attributes of being jyeshtham 'the eldest' and sreshtham 'the greatest' among the several organs in the body. prana is also stated to be vasishtha, the richest and pre-eminent. The derivative meaning of this word vasishtha is that which helps one to dwell, or covers one splendidly, or most comfortably accommodated. These attributes of prana are beautifully revealed through an imaginary story.

The organs of speech, the eye, the ear, the mind and the organ of generation, disputed among themselves about the greatness of each. They went to Prajapati, their father for a final decision. Here other organs of sense and action, left out in the story such as those of smell, taste and touch, the hands, legs, and the anus, also have to be included. prajapati said to them: "That one amongst you whose departure from the body makes the body far more wretched than it was before your departure is the greatest amongst you."

Now, the story says that the organs one by one departed from the body by turn, each for a period of one year. At the end of the year, each one re-entered the body and occupied its respective place, and found to its surprise that the body had continued during the year as

before, but without doing the function of the particular organ that had left. The body was not made more wretched than before. When the organ of speech left the body, the body continued to live even as that of a dumb person lives with all the rest of the organs functioning as before. When the eyes left, the body still continued to live like the body of a Similar was the case when each of the other blind man. organs left for a period of one year. Now, it was the turn of the prana, the vital force. It decided to depart from the body. And lo! all the ten organs and the mind started trembling. The mere decision of the prana to leave the body, says the Upanishad, uprooted all the ten organs, even as a fine Sind horse pulls out the pegs to which its legs are tethered when the rider mounts on it. This establishes the vast superiority of prana over all the other organs in the body. All the sense and motor organs and the mind, recognising the greatness of prana, paid large tributes to it. They accepted that their own greatness such as the pre-eminence of the organ of speech, of the stability of the eyes, of the prosperity of the ears, of being the support in the case of the mind, etc., are really only parts of the greatness of prana who is really the eldest, the first born, the greatest and the most pre- eminent.

Everything is the food of prana. All that is eaten by all beings is really eaten by prana alone. Hunger and thirst are, therefore, said to be the characteristics of prana. One should meditate on prana with the above attribute, with the whole universe as its food. Water is the dress of prana. Those who meditate on prana should, therefore, sip a little water before and after taking food which covers the food, as it were. The Chhandogya-upanishad says that the organs are also prana. The cosmic prana or hiranyagarbha is the real presiding deity for all the organs and assumes the names and forms of dik, vayu, aditya, varuna and asvins with reference to the ear, skin, eye, palate and nose, respectively. prana alone is the presiding deity of the five motor organs also. He assumes the names and forms of agni, indra, vishnu, mitra

and prajapati while presiding over the functions of speech, hands, feet, anus and the reproductive organ. The presiding deity of the mind is the moon who is also a manifestation of the cosmic prana. Thus, prana is to be meditated as dominating in all the three aspects, the adhyatmika, adhibhautika and adhidaivika, i.e., with reference to one's own body, the universe, and the celestials.

In the Prasna-upanishad, the second and third questions and their answers deal with the meditation on prana. This meditation comes under lower knowledge referred to in the Mundaka-upanishad I-1-iv. The questioners are Bhargava and Kausalya who are upasakas-meditators of saguna-brahman-in search of the higher knowledge, who approach sage Pippalada in the traditional manner. The sage, after making them live a life of self-control and sraddha for one year with him, instructs them on this prana-vidya. He explains the glory and greatness of prana which controls all that is in this world and the heavens. He says that prana is born out of the Atman. This birth of the prana from the Supreme is compared to the birth of a shadow when a man stands in sunlight. Though prana is the greatest in this relative, phenomenal creation, it is as unsubstantial and unreal as a shadow, with reference to the Atman, the Absolute. The cosmic prana is known as hiranyagarbha which is non-different from the cosmic mind and cosmic intellect. In the individual human body, all the organs and limbs perform their respective functions because of this prana. For the purpose of this meditation, this Upanishad divides prana into five, viz., apana, prana, samana, vyana and udana, and says that apana works in the lower two organs, the anus and the sex organ, ejecting out the waste in the form of faeces and urine, prana issues out through the mouth and nostrils in breathing and rests in the eyes and ears, samana, which is in the middle, distributes equally the food that is eaten from which the organs get their strength to do their allotted duties, vyana moves through the whole body through the 72,72,10,201 nerves, and udana takes the jiva after death to the

heavenly worlds or hells acording to the nature of their actions done, whether meritorious or sinful, and brings them back to this human world when their actions are of a mixed nature.

Having stated the adhyatmika (individual) aspect, sage Pippalada instructs on the adhidaivika (divine) aspect, in order to help meditation. In this divine context, the sun is to be meditated as prana in external manifestation as the very life of all beings. The earth which pulls down everything due to its gravitational force, is to be meditated as apana, the middle space between heaven and earth as samana, the air as vyana, and the light or luminosity out- side as udana.

In the Chhandogya-upanishad, chapter VII, the medi- tation on prana is again introduced in section 15. The great sage Sanatkumara is the teacher and Narada is the disciple. Here it is said that prana is to be meditated as the universal Power greater than name, speech, mind, will, memory, contemplation, understanding, strength, food, water, fire, ether, power of consciousness and aspiration. Just as the spokes of a wheel are fixed to the nave, so are all these and everything else fastened to prana.

Chhandogya-upanishad, chapter I, section 11, mentions another upasana on prana, through the story of one Ushasti, an adept in this prana-vidya. He goes along with his young wife to the place of sacrifice performed by a king. Seeing the performers of the sacrifice such as the prastotr, the udgatr and others are not well versed in the various mantras, Ushasti tells them that if they chant the mantras without knowing the presiding deities, their heads would fall. Hear- ing this, the sacrifice is stopped and the king who is the sacrificer arrives at the spot. He recognises Ushasti as a great knower of prana, satisfies him with presents and requests him to initiate the priests into the deities of the various mantras which they chant. He initiates the prastotr into prana-vidya thus: "prana is the presiding deity of the prastava song. All these movable and immovable beings merge in prana during dissolution and rise out of prana during creation."

This prana-vidya again comes in the Kaushitaki-upani- shad in chapters II and III. In chapter III, there is the anecdote of how Pratardana, the son of Divodasa, the king of Kasi, got initiated into this vidya by indra, the king of the celestials. The vidya is described in great detail in the Atma-purana of Sri Swami Sankarananda Sarasvati. Though this vidya in this Upanishad is sometimes known as pratar- dana-vidya, after the name of the disciple receiving the instruction, it is included under prana-vidya here, as the subject is meditation on cosmic prana, hiranyagarbha. This Upanishad says that prana is brahma, the creator, also called hiranyagarbha. Its messenger is the mind, the protector is the eye, the announcer is the ear and the house- keeper is speech. All the senses bring offerings in the form of experiences, because it is superior to them, even though it does not ask or beg for them, even as charitable people who respect monks who do not beg, invite them and offer food, drink, dress and other bare necessities of life. This cosmic prana guides the speech, the eyes, the ears and other organs including the mind. The story of how a dispute arose among the organs in the body as regards their superiority of one over the other, how when each organ went out of the body, still the body was able to function in its absence, how when the chief prana started to leave the body all the other organs trembled and how when it left the body the organs also had to leave the body, is referred to in this Upanishad also.

Indra's instruction to Pratardana which is the most helpful to all aspirants is: "I am prana, meditate on me as prajna, as life, as immortality, prana is life, life is prana, prana is prajna and prajna is prana, meditate on me as uktha." All the organs and their objects come out of prana and go back to prana. When prana rises, all organs rise and hence it is known by the name uktha. Both prana and prajna which are really non-different, together dwell in the body and together depart from the body. One who has control over the organs and the mind, gets all objects. One gets control over the organs through knowledge of the identity of prana, prajna, the organs and

their objects. One should not desire for individual and separate objects, but should desire to understand that one cosmic prana which is the same as the cosmic intelligence which is ageless and immortal.

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad in the fifth section of the first chapter gives another meditation on prana (vide mantas xxi to xxiii). Here also, the instruction on meditation is imparted through a story which is slightly different from the one mentioned in the second paragraph under this vidya. This story says that prajapati, the creator, projected the organs. They quarrelled with one another. The organ of speech took a vow that it would go on speaking. Death in the form of fatigue captured it. Then the organ of seeing, the eye, took the vow that it would go on seeing, and the organ of hearing took the same vow that it would go on hearing. Both the organs fell as victims to death in the form of tiredness. Similarly, all the other organs took vows and were captured by death who stopped them from functioning. But, this death in the form of fatigue could not do anything with the chief prana which functions as the ingoing and outgoing breath from the time of birth till death. Knowing this truth of the superiority of the chief prana, all the other organs left off their individuality and separateness and identified themselves with it and they are, therefore, called pranas (vide Brahma Sutra II-4-v and vi). Both are born of the supreme Brahman. In fact, all the objects and concepts in this universe are born of Brahman As effects are identical with the cause, they are alone. non-different from Brahman, the pure Consciousness. What- ever we think and speak is nothing but that Consciousness. The scriptures refer to four stages through which the pure Consciousness appears as audible sound in the form of words. They are (i) para (transcendental Consciousness), (ii) pasyanti (manifested-seed form), (iii) madhyama (the middle or subtle form, mental concept), and (iv) vaikhari (the gross, articulate utterance). Thus all sounds are really that pure Consciousness. All words come from brahman. He is within every one as the Atman in His trancendental aspect, as prajna and isvara in His

causal aspect, as taijasa and hiranyagarbha in His subtle form and as visva and virat in His gross form. The identification of the organs with the prana is in the adhyatmika aspect and relates to the body.

Now with regard to the gods, in the adhidaivika aspect, the meditator should meditate on the identity of fire, sun, moon and the other gods with vayu, air. While the other gods cease to function, the god of air does not. It is prana in its cosmic aspect that is meant. All gods are projected by vayu or hiranyagarbha. The sun, moon, fire and the rest rise from the cosmic vital force and set in it.

The meditator should combine all the attributes of prana mentioned in Kaushitaki Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Prasna and Kaushitaki Upanishads mentioned above, as also those mentioned in other Upanishads where meditation of prana is dealt with and not included here.

The result of this meditation is gradual liberation by identification with hiranyagarbha. The meditator who attains this result is affected neither by good acts nor bad acts. He need not pray or beg for anything, for everything is now non-different from him. Just as a man who is al- ready in his village, is not eager as to when he will reach the village, the knower of the cosmic prana in whom exist all the worlds,, cannot have any desire for or fear about anything. He becomes a surpassing speaker, most eloquent and sweet in his speech. He will have no occasion to be apologetic on any account. Should such a knower of prana sprinkle the sacred paste or water used in the sacrifice on a dry or dead stump, life will be restored to it and it will again flourish with green branches and leaves. On the fall of the body, the prana leads him to whatever world he desires. His line of progeny sustains no break. He attains krama-mukti, gradual liberation.

46. STOBHA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SYLLABLES OF STOBHA)

This vidya occurs in section 13 of the first chapter in the Chhandogya-upanishad. The symbols here for meditation are very difficult to understand especially by the modern youths imitating foreign culture, being completely ignorant of even the fundamentals of the sanatana dharma, the eternal cosmic law. The meanings and significance of these symbols cannot be easily grasped. The Sanskrit language in the original is highly archaic. The truth that is attempted to be conveyed by the Upanishad is not at all easy of grasp for the present day generation. Unless one thinks deeply with full concentration and sraddha, there is little hope for success. The meditation also is very difficult to practise without the help of adepts in such meditations. The truth is hidden between the lines as in other similar vidyas. Literal meanings of the words cannot help us much in practising such vidyas.

The 'stobha' is another portion of sama-veda. It means sounds or syllables which are chanted in sama-veda. Here, in this meditation thirteen such sounds are enjoined for meditation, each as identical with a part of the universe which are objects of devotion. They are (1) hau, (2) hai, (3) atha, (4) iha, (5) i, (6) u, (7) e, (8) auhoi, (9) him, (10) svara, (11) ya, (12) vak, and (13) hum. These are to be meditated as (1) earth, (2) air, (3) moon, (4) atman, (5) fire, (6) sun, (7) invocation, (8) visvedevas, (9) prajapati, (10) prana, (11) food, (12) virat and (13) the variable and undefinable. Certain similarities are also given to help meditation as in other vidyas. The last one, the undefinable refers to the 'Supreme Unmanifested'. The stobha 'hum' is also indistinct. It should be meditated upon as the 'Unmanifested Supreme' which cannot be said to be either existence or non-existence. It is variable because It itself has expressed as this world of multifarious objects. The result of this meditation on this secret doctrine is stated to be the attainment of all benefits of speech. The meditator will become rich in everything, in food, cattle, wealth, name, fame, etc. He will also be

healthy and have good digestion. Such meditation will purify the mind of the meditator and prepare it for the dawn of the Supreme Knowledge which alone is the aim and purpose of all vidyas. He who practises the 13th stobha, hum, as the variable and the undefinable which is none other than the Supreme, realises the Supreme. He realises the secret Truth revealed by the Lord in the Bhagavad-gita through his statement: Barvasya cha'ham hridi sannivishto mattah-smritir-jnanam- apohanam cha, vedaischa sarvair-ahameva vedyo vedantakrit vedavid-eva cha'ham (XV-15). The Lord here proclaims in very clear terms, in very simple language, that He is seated in the hearts of all, the spiritual heart which is everywhere and thus shows His all-pervasive nature. There is nothing other to Him. This is again affirmed by saying that from Him alone emerge memory and also forgetfulness, knowledge as well as ignorance. When it is He who projects even ignorance and forgetfulness, what can be here which is not His projection! He alone is to be known through knowledge. It is again He who has projected the philosophies contained in the Upanishads. He alone is the Knower of Knowledge. The meditator who identifies with Him neither accepts nor rejects anything here. He does not either accept or disown the existence or non-existence of this world. He abides in Supreme Peace.

47. SAMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON SAMA)

The whole of chapter II of the Chhandogya-upanishad gives the meditation on sama, the whole sama both the fivefold and the sevenfold and not each part. The fivefold sama consists of the following parts: himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara, and nidhana. The sevenfold sama consists of: himkara, prastava, adi, udgitha pratihara, upadrava and nidhana. These parts are also called bhakti. These meditations are given below.

Section 1 of the chapter gives the meditation on the whole sama consisting of both the five and the seven parts as excellent (sadhu). This word sadhu here means all auspiciousness free of any defect, all that is good such as happiness, kindly behaviour, absence of evil, sinful and the like, because in Sanskrit language the word sama has that connotation. asama means inauspicious. The two words sama and sadhu have the same meaning. They also mean dharma, the Cosmic Law. He who meditates the whole sama as sadhu, auspiciousness, will become possessed of all virtues, not opposed to the srutis and smritis, and the other scriptures and will enjoy their good results.

Section 2 instructs on the meditation on the worlds as The worlds are to be considered as the fivefold sama. instituted of the following five, viz., earth, fire, sky, sun, and the heaven. The earth is to be meditated as himkara, fire as prastava, sky as udgitha, sun as pratihara and heaven as nidhana. The Cosmic Law pervades all the worlds. Further, the worlds may be meditated as the effect and sadhu as the cause. So, after the meditation on Cosmic Law, the meditation on the worlds is given. The similarities helpful for meditation are as follows: Earth is himkara as both are the first, the former the first among the worlds and the latter the first among the fivefold sama. Fire is prastava as both are commencements, the former is that in which the sacrifice is commenced and the latter word means commencement also, in

addition to its other meaning which is a division of sama. The sky (gagana) is udgitha, since the syllable ga is common in both the words. The sun is pratihara, because the sun is pratiprani (that which appears as though before every being) and prati is common to both the words. Heaven is nidhana which word means that in which something is deposited. As it is in heaven that all beings leaving this world are deposited as it were, the two are identical. Next, the meditator should meditate in the reverse order from above, i.e., starting from heaven. Heaven is himkara, both being the first in this order. For a man on the earth, earth is the first and heaven is the last. For one in the heaven, heaven is the first and earth to which one comes back is the last. Only when the sun rises creatures commence their activities. So sun is pras- As in the first case, gagana (sky) and udgitha, tava. because of their having the same syllable ga, are to be meditated as identical. Fire is carried here and there (prati- karana). So it is identical with pratihara. Earth is the place, where beings coming back from heaven are deposited and hence earth is nidhana. The result of this meditation on the sama that is all auspiciousness, is that the meditator who is endowed with the quality of auspiciousness, becomes the enjoyer of everything in these worlds.

Section 3 enjoins the meditation of the fivefold sama as rain, which is the cause for the existence of the worlds. Rain includes the wind that precedes, the formation of cloud, the actual shower, the lightning, and the final The first wind is himkara, formation of clouds cessation. is prastava, shower is udgitha, lightning is pratihara and the cessation of rain is nidhana. Thus one should meditate. The similarities between each pair is to be understood as something like those in the just previous case. As already observed, to the modern mind, these similarities suggested for meditation may appear to be fantastic and even funny. But the seers of the Upanishad who have the vision of the Truth, have an altogether different view about them. To them everything other to the one, non-dual Supreme, is unreal and non-

existent. So, to sublimate the unreal, un- real objects and unreal methods alone are required. The result of this meditation is that the meditator will get rain according to his desire and he will be able to bring rain even during times of heavy draught in the country.

Section 4 imparts the meditation on the five forms of waters which are the products of rain, as the fivefold sama. The rising up of the clouds, the actual raining, the rivers that flow towards the east, those rivers that flow towards the west and the ocean, are to be meditated as himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara and nidhana respect- The meditator who practises this meditation will ively. not meet with accidental death in water and he will not fail to get plenty of water even in deserts.

Section 5 deals with the upasana of the five seasons, viz., spring, summer, rainy season, autumn and winter as himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara and nidhana. One who practises this meditation will enjoy all the seasons equally and will get all seasonal objects of enjoyment.

Section 6 gives the meditation on animals, because all animals flourish and will be happy when the seasons are favourable. The meditation is on goats, sheep, cows, horses and man, as himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara, and nidhana, respectively. One who practises this meditation will become possesed of plenty of animals and will also enjoy the benefit by giving them away as gifts, charity, presentations and the like.

Section 7 teaches the meditation on something more subtle, progressively better and superior to the previous ones. This pertains to oneself, one's own organs. The five organs, the organ of smell, speech, eye, ear and mind are to be meditated as himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara and nidhana, respectively. The meditator, as a result of this meditation, will lead a better life and win over higher worlds.

One can meditate on the whole sama as stated in section 1, or on the fivefold sama as given in sections 2 to 7. Those who are detached from the fivefold sama can practise meditation on the sevenfold sama. This meditation is dealt with from section 8 onwards. One should meditate on the sama as vak, speech. Whatever is hum in speech is to be meditated as himkara, as the letter ha is common to both. pra is to be meditated as prastava, as the letter pra is common to both. Similarly whatever speech is qualified by pra is to be meditated as prastava. Whatever is qualified by a, ut, prati, upa, and ni is to be meditated respectively as adi, udgitha, pratihara, upadrava and nidhana. He who knows the sama thus as auspicious, and meditates in this manner, to him his speech yields all that is auspicious and he becomes rich in food and will have good digestion.

Section 9-This second meditation on the sevenfold sama is on the sun- the sun just before rising, the sun that has just risen, the sun that is assembling its rays, the mid-day sun, the sun in the later part of the after- noon, the sun when it is past afternoon and the sun just after setting. These seven are to be meditated as himkara, prastava, adi, udgitha, pratihara, upadrava and nidhana respectively. The sun has no increase or decrease, but always remains the same, sama. Therefore, it is the same as sama which means the same in all conditions. The result is identification with the sun-god.

In section 10 it is shown that the sun through the two forms of day and night, destroys the world and therefore, he is death. In order to transcend this death, another meditation is given in this section which is based on the number of letters. Through 21 Sanskrit letters constituting the seven names the meditator attains the sun and through the 22nd letter, he goes beyond the sun, i.e., beyond death. He attains freedom from grief and pain. With this, ends the meditation on the sevenfold sama. (For details regarding the numbers, please see the commentary of Sri Acharya Sankara on this section of the Upanishad.)

With section 11 begins the meditation on sama with certain definite names which have got beneficial results. One should meditate on the gayatra sama as woven, as it were, i.e., established in mind, speech, eye, ear and prana. Mind is himkara, speech is prastava, eye is udgitha, ear is pratihara, and prana, the vital force is nidhana. He who practises this meditation will have all his senses in perfect condition and lives the full span of hundred years. He also becomes possessed of cattle, wealth, progeny, name and fame. He should keep the vow that he would be maha- manah, a person with a large mind and never a narrow- minded man.

Section 12 gives the meditation on rathantara-sama woven, as it were, in fire. The striking or churning the fire-sticks is himkara, the smoke that comes out is prastava, the blazing fire is udgitha, the embers that are formed are pratihara and the extinguishing of fire is nidhana. Thus should one meditate. This meditation makes the meditator shine with holy effulgence. He will have good appetite, lives for one hundred years with all kinds of wealth and greatness. He should however keep the vow that he should not sip water or spit facing the fire.

Section 13 instructs the meditation on vamadeva-sama, as woven in a couple, in their act of copulation. One who meditates on this sama as stated here, will become rich in progeny, get long and glorious life with all wealth and fame. Here, the vow is that the meditator should not dispise any woman.

Section 14 deals with the meditation on the brihat- sama as woven in the sun. One should meditate thus. The rising sun is himkara, the sun that has already risen is prastava, the mid-day sun is udgitha, the after-noon sun is pratihara and the setting sun is nidhana. The fruits men-tioned for this meditation are radiance and refulgence and all prosperity, long life, fame and the rest, as in the case of the previous meditation. He should never find fault with blazing sun. This vow is prescribed for him.

Section 15 gives the meditation on the vairupa-sama as woven in the five stages of rain. The rising up of the white clouds, the formation of the rain bearing clouds, the raining, the lightning and thunder, and lastly the cessation of rain, are to be meditated as himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara and nidhana respectively. The meditator will get beautiful cattle in plenty, will live the full span of life, a life with glory and greatness, offspring and wealth, name and fame. He should however keep to the vow of not finding fault with rain-clouds when they rain heavily.

Section 16 gives another meditation. After rain comes the seasons. Seasons are more comprehensive than rain which is only one among the many seasons. The spring, summer, rainy season, autumn and winter are respectively to be meditated as the himkara, prastava, udgitha, prati- hara and nidhana of the vairaja sama. The meditator should The keep the vow of not finding fault with any season. result is all auspiciousness as in the previous meditation.

Section 17 gives the instructions on meditation sakvari-sama as woven in the worlds. Earth, sky, heaven, directions and ocean are to be meditated as himkara, pras- tava, udgitha, pratihara and nidhana respectively. During the practice of this meditation, the meditator should take the vow that he would never speak ill of the worlds. The result is similar to that in the previous meditation.

Section 18 enjoins the meditation on revati-sama as woven in the animals. The goats sheep, cows, horses and man are to be meditated as himkara, prastava, udgitha, pratihara, and nidhana, respectively. The meditator should take the vow that he would never find fault with animals and should hold on to it strictly. The result of this meditation also is similar to the previous ones, viz., the meditator will become the possessor of much cattle, will live the full hundred years leading a happy and glorious life with offspring and wealth, name and fame.

In Section 19 is given the meditation on yajnayajniya sama as woven in the parts of the body. The hair is to be meditated as himkara, the skin as prastava, the flesh as udgitha, the bone as pratihara and the marrow as nidhana. The vow to be taken and observed by the meditator is that he would, for one year, refrain from eating fish and meat. Or, the vow may be that he would abstain from non-veget- arian food throughout his life. The fruits that accrue thro- ugh this meditation are that all his limbs will be free of any defect, he will reach the full length of life with all glory, progeny, cattle and wealth, all in plenty. He will also have great name and fame.

Section 20 gives the meditation on rajana-sama. One should meditate on rajana-sama as woven in the gods; the fire-god in himkara; the air-god in prastava; the sun-god in udgitha; the deity presiding over the stars in pratihara; and the moon-god in nidhana. The vow of the meditator should be that he should not speak ill of the wise people. The result of this meditation will take the meditator to the worlds of these gods, or will bestow on him a good and prosperous worldly life, or effect his identity with the gods, depending upon his nature of meditation and his desires.

Section 21, the last part of this meditation is on sama which has no special name. It is on the collection of sama woven in all. This meditation is to be done thus: The three Vedas, rik, yajus and sama are himkara; the three worlds, this world, the intermediate region and the heaven, are prastava; the three gods, fire, air and sun are udgitha; the stars, the birds and the rays of light are pratihara; and the serpents, the celestials and the manes are nidhana. He who meditates thus and knows thus that all the sama is, as it were, woven warp and woof in all things in the universe, becomes the all. He becomes the Lord of all, getting offer- ings from all. His holy vow should be that he would meditate 'I am the all'. The Upanishad in praise of this meditation quotes a mantra which says: "There is nothing greater than

the above said five sets of triads. To him who knows this, all beings from all quarters bring offerings".

48. MADHU-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SUPREME AS HONEY)

The madhu vidya given in the first eleven sections of chapter III of the Chhandogya-upanishad, it is stated, was originally imparted by the Cosmic Person, hiranyagarbha him- self to virat or prajapati who in his turn instructed Manu. Manu instructed this meditation to Ikshvaku and others, his progeny. Sage Aruna also instructed his own eldest son Uddalaka on this vidya.

The meditation here is to be done on the following lines: The Sun is to be meditated as the honey of the gods or the celestials, the sky as the honeycomb, heaven as the cross beam from which the honeycomb hangs, the water particles in the rays of the sun as the eggs of the honey-bees, the rays of the sun coming from the five directions (east, south, west, north and up) as the honey cells in the respective directions, the mantras in the rigveda, yajurveda, sama- veda, atharvaveda and the secret teachings as the honey bees, the itihasas and puranas, and the pranava as the flowers, and the waters as the nectar. Verses of the rik and other Vedas which are the bees, pressed the Vedas and from them is produced the essence or nectar in the form of fame, splendour of limbs, alertness of the senses, virility and food for eating. The essence flows forth and rests in the sun, the honey. It is the essence that is seen as the red, white, black and deep hues and the quivering in the middle of the sun. These essences are to be meditated as the Juice of juices. Vedas are the essences of all the worlds and this is the final Essence of those essences.

Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji has explained this allegory as follows to help meditation: "The Sun is described here in this vidya as motionless and remaining alone with neither rising nor setting. From the standpoint of the sun, the sky is described as a cross beam for the honey comb, because the three worlds are like eggs, the higher expanding beyond the lower and from the second world (atmosphere)

which is between the sun and the earth, the third world would appear like a cross beam. The sun is the honey or the Self of the second world even as the Soul is the honey of the body. The devas, celestials have this honey which they do not drink, but are satisfied at the mere sight of it. The metaphor in this meditation on the sun as the honey, implies meditation on the world-soul which is the centre of the worlds and the planes of consciousness existing external to it. This meditation leads to saguna-brahman, and to reach the nirguna-brahman one has to transcend the central essence of the sun where Brahman is said to be with his mayic splendour. One who knows this vidya-to him the sun does never set. It is always day for him, the Light of the essential soul" (Essence of Vedanta).

This meditation is highly praised at the close of section. 11, in the Upanishad. Among many who are eligible to be initiated into similar vidyas, the Upanishads says that this particular vidya should be given only to one's own eldest son or one's devoted disciple and not to any one else. The reason for this restriction is stated to be the superior nature of this vidya. Even if one were to offer to the teacher in return for initiation into this vidya, the whole of the sea-girt earth filled with wealth, it would not be a proper requital, for the result that one attains through this meditation, is more valuable than his whole mortal world.

49. SANDILYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION OF SAGE SANDILYA)

According to the Chhandogya-upanishad, this is the meditation through which sage Sandilya had the revelation of the Supreme Being. Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is of the view that though this vidya is suited to those who practise saguna meditation, it may be used, by divesting it of the particular attributes, for nirguna meditation also. It is one among the very important and difficult vidyas. Sri Acharya Sankara Bhagavatpada, well known among his admirers as the bhashyakara (commentator), in his commentary on Brahma-sutra III-3-xxiii, says that this vidya and others of similar type are brahma-vidyas (.....sandilya-vidya prabhritayo brahma-vidya.....).

The Upanishad gives this vidya in section 14 of chapter III. According to it, one should meditate thus: "sarvam khalvidam brahma, taj-jalani iti santa upasita-Verily all this universe is Brahman; from Him do all things as though originate, do dissolve in Him and do exist in Him. On Him one should meditate with a calm mind, a mind freed of all its modifications in the form of the pairs of opposites such as good and bad, merit and sin, likes and dislikes, etc." He is to be meditated as seated inside the heart, permeating the mind, having prana as His body and consciousness as His form, with true desires, more pervasive and more subtle than the ether, whose is all creation, whose is all pure desire, all pure smell, all pure taste, who exists pervading all this, who is without any organ free of all fear and agitation, smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, greater than the space, heaven and all the worlds.

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad in chapter V, section 6, says that one should meditate on Brahman as possessed of the limiting adjuncts of mind, as identified with the mind (manomaya), resplendent and lustrous. He is the Reality seated inside the heart, smaller than the

smallest, subtler than the subtlest, He is the Lord of all, the supreme Ruler of all and governs all that is here.

The vajasaneyi branch to which the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad belongs, under the topic of Secret Knowledge of Fire (agni rahasya) also gives a vidya in the name of Sandilya to whom it was revealed. There it is stated: "One should meditate on the self as identified with the mind having prana as the body and effulgence as the form or appearance."

In another mantra of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, in answer to king Janaka's question about the Atman, sage Yajnavalkya answers that It is the purusha that is identified with the intellect (vijnanamaya-purusha) and is in the midst of the organs, the self-effulgent Light within the heart (IV-3-vii). And Brahma-sutra I-3-xlii establishes that It is not the embodied soul but the Supreme Lord alone.

Brahma-sutra III-3-i enunciates the general principle that vidyas or upasanas described in the various Upanishads are the same on account of the sameness of the injunction, connection, form, name, etc. Sutra III-3-xix states that the vidyas in the same Branch also are similarly the same, because there is unity of vidyas owing to non-difference of the object of meditation. Hence, the four vidyas, one in the Chhandogya-upanishad and the three in the Vajasaneyi Branch have to be treated as one only and the attributes or traits in all the four places have to be combined in this meditation.

In this vidya, one should meditate on the Atman as non-different from the world which is said to originate, exist and disappear in It. Just as a pot as a product or effect of clay is non-different from clay which is its cause, the world as the effect of Brahman is non-different from its cause which is Brahman. In other words, the world is an unreal appearance and Brahman alone is real. Therefore, all effort to establish a real relationship between the world and Brahman will only be futile. Really there are no two separate entities as 'world' and

'Brahman', both being pure Conscious- ness alone. Scriptures like the Yoga Vasishtha, Tripura Rahasya, the Mandukya Upanishad and the like directly deny the cause-effect relationship itself and establish that this world is Consciousness alone. This is the import of the mantra in this meditation, "sarvam khalvidam brahma --all this is verily Brahman".

The beginner in the spiritual path may here raise a doubt. The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad has declared 'neti, neti-not this, not this' as the best definition of the Absolute. According to this great declaration, the Absolute is that which is after the complete negation of all that is objective and subjective. Nothing that is limited or finite or relative can be the Absolute which is unlimited, infinite and unrelated. Even these latter adjectives tagged on to the Absolute have to be negated as they are also in a way limitations to the Absolute which transcends the individual and the universal, limitation and non-limitation, finite and infinite and all such pairs of opposites. Then how can we say that "all this is verily Brahman" according to which even this body, a stone on the roadside, the sun in the heaven, etc., etc., have to be considered as the Absolute. These two apparently contradicting statements of the Upanishads are to be reconciled. The illustration of the waves and the ocean gives some help in this matter. Though the waves and the ocean are generally considered as two separate entities for all empirical purpose, both are really one and the same, in as much as both are water and nothing but water. Even so, the limited objects and the subjects are negated as not the unlimited, transcendental Absolute. And at the same time all are Consciousness and Conscious- ness alone without which none can have even existence. Even non-existence cannot exist without Consciousness. There is, therefore, nothing other to Consciousness. This would be more clear when we analyse our daily dream experience and find that all the objects that appeared in the dream including the subject, the actions, speeches and thoughts therein are really nothing but the

Consciousness which was 'experienced' in its pure state in deep sleep. In dream the same pure, unmoded Consciousness appears as real entities with the division of subject and object and the relation between the two.

So, in this vidya, the meditator and the process of meditation are to be identified with the Atman-brahman, the object of meditation. This is impossible for the neophytes in the beginning and difficult even for adepts. For, it is no process of 'becoming' anything, but It is 'Being' itself. Though just like all other vidyas, we start here also with the triad of meditator, meditation and that which is meditated upon, we end in the ultimate, homogeneous oneness of all the three. The meditator is meditating on himself, as it were. The universe which as though has come out, yet remains non-different from the Absolute. Can we say that Consciousness becomes conscious of itself? Yes, but there is no division as the 'subject consciousness', 'object consciousness' and 'becoming conscious of consciousness'.

As one wills or decides, one acts. And as one acts, one experiences. So, experiences are nothing but willing. They are, therefore, said to be the result of our past actions. What we think we become. So to become Brahman we must be fully absorbed in the meditation on Brahman. The whole universe is the projection of the mind. It is the light of Consciousness, the Atman who permeates every- thing. prana, the cosmic vital force is to be meditated as the vehicle. The five sheaths, the food-sheath, the vital force-sheath, the mind-sheath, the intellectual-sheath and the bliss-sheath, which are taught in the early stages as covering the innermost Atman, are not really different from the Atman, as they are only the expressions of the Atman. All is Atman-effulgence. The Atman is said to be the Light of lights in many places. Whatever It wills, that materialises without any effort, because It itself is every- thing, everywhere, at all times the past, present and future. It is as vast and subtle as space, nay more vast and more subtle than space. For, It is the cause of space, as it were. The Taittiriya-

upanishad says that akasa, space, has come out of Brahman. After creation, He enters into all. He creates and pervades the whole of the created without leaving any space unpervaded by Him. As the Veda says after pervading the whole universe, He extends further by ten inches (infinitely). Space though the effect of Brahman, is still non- different from Brahman. All action What- is His action and still, He is said to be actionless. ever happens anywhere, at any time, due to any cause, including all speech and thought, happens in Him and by Him, the pure Consciousness which is ever unchangeable and immovable. So is the case of all desires. Every desire is His desire, and therefore, all desires are said to be pure. Similar is the case of all sense experiences such as smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing, speaking, walking, grasp- ing, evacuating and enjoying. Although the Upanishad mentions only qualities in general, it is interpreted that only pure, agreeable, good and virtuous ones are possessed by the Atman. These are however not the limited qualities, the opposites of the impure, disagreeable, bad and sinful, but are those which transcend all the pairs of opposites which are limited. Though He does not possess the sense organs, the motor organs and the internal organ, in the usual sense of the terms, He alone is the doer and experiencer. As He is self- fulfilled and as nothing separate from Him exists outside Him, there is no unfulfilled desire, and there- fore, neither agitation and pain about the past, nor fear about the future exists in Him.

The meditator should meditate on this Supreme Being as seated in his heart as the smallest and subtlest that could be conceived of. But he should not commit the mistake of limiting Him in size, as smaller than a grain of paddy or a barley corn or a mustard seed or a grain of millet or the kernel of a grain of millet. Why? Because the immediately following portion of the same mantra says that He is greater than the physical universe, vaster than the space, more immense than the heaven and more enormous than all the worlds put together. We all know this universe in which this planet earth is contained, is only one

among billions of universes, which fact is accepted by modern science also. All these numberless universes cannot compare with the magnitude of the Atman in one's heart. All of them dwindle into insignificance before Him, even as a fire fly in the mid-day sun. Yet, He is within all as the most subtlest, as the subject in all objects, as the Atman-brahman in the infinite universe. He is far far away, to the extroverted mind, while to the introverted, pure mind of the meditator He is the nearest, nay inseparable from him.

The meditator mediates, through his calm and purified mind, that he would attain this after the fall of the body, after departing from here. The Upanishad says that one has to meditate thus throughout the day by entertaining these thoughts. For such a meditator, secular life should not be different from life spiritual. He should convert all his daily activities into spiritual activity, with this as the background thought. He should have the firm conviction that all the universe along with himself and his meditation are nothing but the Atma-Brahman. Sri Acharya Sankara in his sivamanasika puja, has given this meditation in the form of a simple verse: atma tvam girija matih sahachara pranah sariram griham, puja te vishayopabhoga-rachana nidra samadhi sthitih; sancharahpadayoh pradakshinavidhi stotrani sarvagiro, yadyad-karma karomi tad-tadakhilam sambho tavaradhanam-O Lord, the Atman is You, the intellect is Your spouse Girija, the sense organs and pranas are Your attendants, body is Your temple, all experiences of sense objects are Your worship, sleep is samadhi, all movements are sacred perambulations round Your temple, all speech is Your praise thus whatever I do, speak or think, all that is Your meditation."

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra says that this manomaya purusha is the Lord and Ruler or Governor of all. He is the antaryamin, the Inner Controller. In meditation, one should try to tune up one's consciousness to infinity, to enable to grasp and realise the import behind these mantras. Atman's power and his rulership are not external and isolated from Him, as those of a king for example. They

are internal and one with Him. As long as the controlled or the ruled is outside oneself as in the case of a king and his subjects, in the above example, it is impossible to exercise real control and rulership. All differentiation or separateness is subject to disintegration and destruction. Real power is the recognition and realisation that one's Self, the Atman as Brahman, the Self in all.

The oft-quoted example of space in a pot and the space outside illustrates this point. Though we generally make a distinction between the two and say 'the small pot space' and 'the large atmospheric space', because of the apparent separation by the walls of the pot, really they are not different. They remain as one homogeneous space, undivided by the walls of the pot, even when the pot remains as the pot, because the walls of the pot are also the same space which is both inside and outside. The walls are the effect of space and hence non-different from space. So is the case with 'I' and 'Brahman'. After this realisation, viz., that 'I am Brahman', comes the realisation of the import of the mahavakya 'All this is Brahman-sarvam khalvidam brah-ma', with which the Chhandogya-upanishad starts this sandilya vidya. One should realise 'I am Brahman' first, and then 'all this is Brahman'. Sri Acharya Sankara refers to this in verse 3 of his work which goes by the name of satasloki. He says: "adau brahmaham-asmi-ityanubhava udite khalvidam brahma paschat".

The result of this meditation is either jivan-mukti, em- bodied liberation or videha-mukti, disembodied liberation. Is there any difference between the two? According to some there cannot be any difference in the ultimate pure Conscious- ness, which liberation is. But from the level of the aspirants marching towards the goal, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has said that a jivanmukta is one who is established in the fourth bhumika viz., sattvapatti, also called turiya which transcends the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states, when there is svarupa-nasa of the mind and when the waking world appears like the dream, unreal and .without any substance. And

videhamukta is one who has no individual consciousness in the waking state which is called turiya-atita which transcends the fourth bhumika of sattvapatti in which there is arupa-nasa of the mind when waking state is experienced as one homogeneous consciousness as in deep sleep state. (The seven bhumikas or progressive levels of consciousness are: asamsakti, padartha-bhavana, turiya, bhisa-nasa, turiya-atita, sattvapatti and videhamukta). Although it is said that one can become sahaja-nirvikalpa, direct experience of the Truth, an amount of description about them cannot be of much benefit to the aspirant; still it may help him to get some kind of mental concept of the great Truth which is both transcendental and immanent which will give a fillip to his further progress.

We have to say in this context that all talk and discussions, reflections and even meditations on the Absolute in our ignorance, though essentially necessary and serves a purpose, is from the point of view of the Absolute nothing but filtered foolishness. In this connection, an instructive incident told by a sage comes to the mind. A young woman was in great love with a youth. All her pressing proved futile. A few years passed, still she continued to press her suit. Finally the youth yielded. And they met by appointment in a secluded place. The woman found herself seated by the side of her most beloved. She then took her handbag and pulling out a bundle of love letters she had written to him over the past several months, letters expressing her love and admiration, passion and infatuation, how she suffered pain in her separation from him and what experience of love and delight she was expecting from her union with him. She started reading one after another. And he was patiently hearing. Minutes passed, half an hour passed and one full hour also passed. She did not stop. After finishing the first bunch, she was taking the second similar bunch of letters from the handbag. The man who was patiently waiting all the time without speaking a word, now said: "My dear, you seem to be an extraordinary foolish woman. All these love letters are only words

expressing your love and affection for me, the pain in separation, the joy in union and your longing for me. You do not 'see me', the the object of your love sitting by your side for the last one full hour. Instead of enjoying my company, you keep reading your stupid letters, mere words. Can foolishness go any further?" The sage then pointed out that similar or still greater is our foolishness in engaging ourselves in speaking about God, discussing His nature, praising Him through verses composed by others, reading about Him in the scriptures, writing about His transcendental and immanent nature, all the while missing His omnipresence and His direct experience. We should consummate our oneness with Him. He is ever present before us. He is nearer to us than our body and mind. The illustration may be very crass, still it may serve the sincere seeker as a pointer or arrow mark to walk the path spiritual and have the 'direct experience' and not to remain complacent with the sadhana.

50. PURUSHA-VIDYA-2

(MEDITATION ON ONESELF AS SACRIFICE)

Instruction on this purusha-vidya is contained in sections 16 and 17 of chapter III of the Chhandogya-upanishad. There is another purusha-vidya in the Mahanarayana-upanishad, section 80. It is a quite different vidya and therefore, should not be combined with this vidya. This is the view of sage Badarayana (vide B.S. III-3-xxiv).

The word purusha in this meditation means the man who meditates, the aspirant who practises this vidya, the man constituted of the body, mind, prana and the rest. The two sections of the Upanishad enjoin meditation and japa for the long life of the meditator. The meditator himself is to be meditated as a sacrifice. How? What are the similarities helpful for this meditation? These are being given below:

The first 24 years of his life is to be meditated as the morning oblation in the sacrifice. The similarity between the two is that in the sacrifice, oblation is done in the morning with the mantras in the gayatri metre which consists of 24 letters, and 24 years form the first period or the morning part of his life. The next 44 years is to be meditated as the noon oblation made with mantras in trishtup metre consisting of 44 letters. One's life from 25th to 68th year, a period of 44 years forms the midday of his life as it were. The last 48 years is to be meditated as the evening oblation which is generally done in the ritualistic sacrifice with the chanting of mantras in the jagati metre and this metre contains 48 letters. This closing period of life is to be meditated as the closing oblation offered in the evening. In the morning oblation, along with agni, vasus are the gods connected with the sacrifice. The pranas in the meditator are to be meditated as the vasus. For the midday oblation, the gods are rudras along with indra. Here pranas are to be meditated as rudras. In the evening oblation, the gods are the adityas with visvedevas and pranas are to be meditated as adityas. pranas have resemblance to vasus, rudras and adityas. vasu is one

who lives and makes life possible and so is prana. rudra is one who makes one weep and prana also makes one cry and weep during his middle age, evidently due to the heavy responsibilities of the house-holder's life. adiyta is one who accepts everything and so is prana which accepts all sound, touch, form taste and smell.

In this meditation, the meditator is to meditate on his sufferings such as thirst, hunger and absence of enjoyments during the first 24 years, as the initiatory rites in this sacrifice which also involves certain amount of sufferings and pain in the form of fasting and similar acts of sense control. His acts of eating, drinking and rejoicing are to be meditated upon as upasadas. upasat is a kind of sacrifice. His laugh-ing, eating and sex enjoyment are to be considered as stotra and sastra which are chanting of certain specific mantras loudly and which are full of sound as in the case of laughing. His austerity, gifts, uprightness, non-violence and truthfulness are to be meditated as the fees or present- ations to the priests in the sacrifice. Thus, the man himself becomes the ritualistic sacrifice. Regarding both it is said soshayati and asoshta (will give birth and has given birth). The death of the man is to be meditated as the avabhrita, the conclusion of the sacrifice, as both mark the end.

The result of this meditation with the chanting of the mantras as prayer prescribed in the Upanishad, is attain- ment of a long life of 116 years (24 plus 44 plus 48-116) free of illness and pain.

It is also said that this purusha-vidya was expounded by sage Ghora Angirasa to Krishna, son of Devaki.

Such a meditator who is able to live the full span of life on this earth, viz. 116 years, will be fulfilling the four aims of human life generally known as purusharthas which include dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Our sages and scriptures who proclaim that the Divine is both transcendental and immanent at the same time, have prescribed these four aims to realise the Supreme Being even while living in this

world. We can attain moksha, the ultimate goal, if only we follow dharma, the cosmic law, and with that as the basis, earn artha, wealth, property, house, etc., and by making use of them enjoy the pleasures of life, kama. The four stages in life prescribed in the scrip- tures viz. brahmacharya, garhasthya, vanaprastha and sann- yasa also help to achieve the four aims ending in God-realisation. The strict adherence to dharma will not allow to transgress the normal limits of sense enjoyments and thus avoid causing any injury or harship to others whether they are the members of the family or community, country or nation, this world or the other worlds inhabited by the celestials. This vidya if practised will help to realise the presence of the transcendental Supreme as immanent in all beings, sentient and insentient, resulting in that Peace which is beyond the understanding of the intellect.

51. MANO-AKASA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE MIND AND ETHER)

This vidya enjoins meditation on mind as Brahman and ether or space as Brahman, in the individual aspect and universal aspect-with reference to one's own body and with reference to gods or celestials, respectively. This occurs in section 18 of chapter III in the Chhandogya-upanishad.

mano-brahma-ityupasita-ityadhyatmam-The mind is Brahman, thus one should meditate, this is with regard to one's body (including the mind). atha adhidaivatam akaso brahma iti (upasita)-then one should meditate on akasa, ether, as Bahman, and this is with reference to the gods. Both mind and ether are fit symbols for meditation as Brahman, as they are very subtle. Mind is the instru- ment through which Brahman is realised. And ether is all- pervasive and untouched by any object. The Upanishad further states how this meditation is to be practised. The Mind-Brahman has four feet, as it were. What are they? vak, the organ of speech is one foot, prana, (here the organ of smell) is one foot, the eye is one foot and the ear is one foot. This is with reference to the body. With reference to gods, the Space-Brahman has four feet. They are agni, vayu, aditya and disah-the gods of fire, air, sun and directions. Thus the four-footed Brahman is en- joined for meditation in both aspects, the individual and universal.

The commentator Acharya Sankara gives an illustration here. Just as animals like cows attain their destination with their feet, the mind expresses itself or moves through its four feet viz., the organs of speech, smell, vision and hearing. Therefore speech is just like a foot to the mind. Similarly, the organ of smell is also one foot, since through that organ, the mind goes and reaches all the objects of smell. So is the case with the other two feet, the eye and the ear. This is the meditation on Mind-Brahman with reference to one's individual body.

Similarly, one has to meditate with reference to the gods. Just as the four feet of the cow are attached to its belly, the four feet of Space-Brahman, viz., the god of fire, the god of wind, the sun-god and the god of directions attach themselves to Brahman. They are to be meditated as Brahman.

With the light and heat of Fire, the presiding deity of the organ of speech, speech shines and produces energy. In other words, through heat-producing diet like oil, clarified butter and the like, the organ of speech becomes healthy and acquires greater power and more enthusiasm to express itself as words and sentences. Similar is the case of the other three feet of Mind-Brahman, the organ of smell, the eye and the ear. They function and get more strength and power through the presiding deities of air, sun and the directions, the three feet of space-Brahman.

Mind projects the world in the waking and dreaming. states and absorbs it in the deep sleep state. The world exists when the mind functions and ceases to exist in the absence of the mind. And this mind is the effect of Brahman, As the effect is non-different from its cause, as in the case of pot and clay, ornament and gold, etc., the mind is non- different from Brahman. Similarly, ether is the effect of Brahman. "tasmadva etasmat atmana akasa sambhutah- from that Brahman which is the Self was born space"-says Tai. up. II-1-i. In the cosmic dissolution, space also merges in Brahman. So space is non-different from Brahman. Thus both in the individual and divine aspects of the meditation enjoined here, the effect is to be meditated as the cause itself.

The result of this twofold meditation is said to be also two-fold, one visible and the other invisible. The visible result is that the meditator attains fame and glory and shines with the holy effulgence born of sacred wisdom. The invisible result is attainment of Brahman, the ultimate Liberation.

The Atman is said to be the mind of mind (Ke.up.I-2). The Atman is that by which the mind functions. Willed by the Atman the mind goes to its objects. In the practice of Raja- Yoga the objects are withdrawn into the senses and the senses are withdrawn into the mind. It is this mind that meditates. On what? The Atman, its own cause which is subtler than itself. It is a very difficult meditation, for the mind can usually think of only objects grosser than itself. Here, it is directed towards its own cause which is subtler than it. When it achieves this difficult task, it finally ceases to exist, being absorbed in the Atman. The Atman alone daily now exists. The deep sleep state which every one experiences, is a pointer to this absorption of the mind. This state of absorption of the mind when brought about through meditation, leads to Liberation.

The identification of space with Brahman in meditation, is also done by the mind itself. The five gross elements earth, water, fire, air and space should first be reduced to tanmatras, the subtle elements, gandha, rasa, rupa, sparsa and sabda (smell, taste, form, touch and sound). The grossest of the five viz., smell should be merged in its cause, taste, which is subtler. Then taste should be merged in its cause, form. Then form should be merged in touch, and touch in sound, the subtle space. This should finally be identified with Brahman, the ultimate causeless Cause. The result is attainment of oneness with Brahman.

Sometimes, the mind is haunted by fear of its own destruction. Due to attachment to duality one may apprehend fear in the supreme, fearless Brahman. The Mandukya Karika says that the non-discriminating ones who apprehend destruction of their individual personality which becomes the cause of fear, experience fear in the Fearless Absolute (III- 39). The mind may refuse to proceed further. It may ask: "If I also cease to exist, who is there to experience the bliss of the Atman for which I am practising this meditation?"

It may stagnate at this stage. The mind must be educated that it is not going to die, but is to get immortality, death- less state. It is true in one sense that there will be none to experience the Bliss, for the meditator becomes Bliss him- self. It is a state-not a state in the ordinary sense of the term-which is beyond the mind, and therefore, transcends all words. It is the indescribable Supreme.

After a storm when the waves, ripples, foam and spray in the ocean subside and become one with the ocean which becomes a calm and magnificent sheet of colourless, formless water (freed of its different, individual, distinct forms such as the wave, ripple, foam, etc.) do the waves and ripples and foam lose themselves? Are they destroyed? And is there any cause for fear of loss and destruction? Certainly not. On the other hand, they have re-gained the infinite ocean. They have become the ocean itself. Similar is the case of the mind which becomes one with Brahman through this meditation.

All meditation is done by the mind alone. Mind is as mysterious as the world its own creation on the one side, and it is also as mysterious as Brahman its cause. It is said to be the cause of both bondage and liberation. All meditations start with duality but end in the non-dual experience in which all questions about creation of this world, mind, bondage, liberation, etc., dissolve. The great sage Vasistha explains to Sri Rama as to the reality or otherwise of the mind, and its creation of bondage and liberation. Summing up the whole truth in the following few words, Vasishtha says: "O Rama, the mind in a state of ignorance imagines bondage which exists as long as ignorance exists and vanishes even as a dream vanishes when the dreamer wakes up. In the vision of the enlightened sages, the hallucination of both bondage and liberation does not exist at all." To illustrate this truth the sage has cited the following instructive story told by a nanny to a young boy:

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful but non-existent city. In that city, three princes lived happily but two of them were unborn and the third was not conceived at all. Due to their great ill-luck, they lost all

their near and dear ones, and therefore had to leave that beautiful city. They travelled on foot, suflering the heat of the sun at midnight. Their feet were pierced by the tips of grass. They rested in the shade of three trees two of which had perished long ago and the third did not sprout at all. After resting there and eating the fruits of those trees, they continued their journey. They reached a river which was dry and they refreshed themselves by taking a bath and drinking water. After a long journey they reached a big city which was non- existing. In that city, there were three palaces which had neither pillars nor walls nor roofs. There they got three golden vessels all broken and pulverised. They purchased one kilogram minus two kilograms of rice and cooked it in one of the golden vessels. They first fed their guests three in number, two of whom were bodiless and one mouthless. After feeding them they also partook of the rest of the cooked rice. They were very happy and lived in that city for a number of years. The nanny told the boy: "Remember this beautiful story and you will become wise when you grow up".

To many the citation of this story in this context of meditation on the mind and space as Brahman, may seem to be odd and even fantastic. To them the reply is that the story was cited by Vasishtha to Sri Rama in the very same context of reconciling this illusory world appearance with the ultimate Truth which is Brahman. The oft-quoted example of gold and necklace helps us to a great extent to grasp this reconciliation. Although there is nothing other than gold in the necklace, why not we know that there is no necklace as necklace? Can you throw away the necklace keeping the gold at the same time! This has to be done not by any physical action, but through understanding. The necklace is an illusion when seen other to the gold, as illusory as the things mentioned in the story.

52. ADITYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SUN)

This vidya prescribes a meditation on the sun as saguna brahman also called hiranyagarbha and it occurs in the Chhandogya-upanishad, chapter III, section 19. The section starts with the mantra: adityo brahma ityadesah-The sun- god is Brahman, this is the instruction for meditation.

The rest of the mantras are said to be in praise of the sun-god to help meditation. The Upanishad says: "asad eve- dam agra asit-Before creation all this universe was asat, non- existence. Then it became existent, manifested. The term asat occuring here should not be interpreted as complete non- existence, the opposite of existence, since all this world cannot come out of nothing. Something can never come out of nothing. Nothing alone can come out of nothing. So, the state before creation here referred to as asat is the un- manifested state, avyakta or avyakrita. It may look like a void. It is the state of isvara in the macrocosmic aspect and prajna in the microcosmic counterpart. According to Sri Sankaracharya this is an eulogy on the sun in whose absence nothing can exist. Everything in this world will become non-existent if there were no sun.

Even as a seed swells before sprouting, the Unmanifested started to manifest itself. A vibration took place, as it were. Then appeared the subtle world, even as a small sprout comes out of a seed. The names and forms were in the subtle state of tanmatras, also referred to as the subtle elements. Becoming grosser, they became the cosmic water and then took the form of an egg. After one year, it bifurcated into two halves, one golden and the other silver-the heaven and the earth. The outer membrane became the mountains and the inner membrane became the mist and the clouds. The veins are the rivers and the water in the lower belly is the ocean. The sun is that which is born out of this egg. Being the first-born to the Lord, there were loud

sounds, even as there is much eclat at the birth of the first male child to a wealthy man. All beings and all objects of enjoyment were then born. It is on the rise of the sun every morning that people rise up from their sleep and engage themselves in all kinds of activities to fulfil their desires. So, with the birth of the sun-brahman, hiranya- garbha, virat, the world comes into existence with all its desire, action and enjoyment of their fruits. So, the visible sun in the sky is a symbol for meditation as saguna-brahman, the creator of this phenomena, the cosmos.

One who meditates on the sun with the above said glories and greatness, becomes identified with Brahman. This is the unseen result which accrues to him after death. The visible result here even when alive, is that all auspicious sounds by the enjoyment of which no sin will accrue, hasten to him and give him delight.

In many of these vidyas, the spiritual aspirants are advised to propitiate the so called inferior divinities in charge of the universal activities, such as agni, indra, varuna, etc. Similarly we are to worship and propitiate Lord Siva, Vishnu, Sakti, Aditya, Ganesa and Skanda, the six manifestations of the Supreme Absolute. upasana of these deities is considered by the wise as preliminary step for one who desires to take up brahma-upasana. Suddenly if one starts medita- tion on the Absolute, one's attempt is likely to be thwarted by these lesser divinities. Acharya Sankara has regularised and established the daily worship of these six deities and he is, therefore, known as the shanmata sthapaka, Founder of the six religious creeds. Worship of the sun-god aditya forms part of the daily deva-puja done in the houses. adityam- ambikam-vishnum-gananatham-mahesvaram; pancha devan- smaren-nityam, maha-pataka nasanam (the daily medi- tation on the five deities, the Sun-god, the goddess Sakti, Lord Vishnu, Lord Ganesa and Lord Siva, is capable of destroying even the worst sins)-is a verse well known among the devotees. surya namaskar is done daily by many of the house-holders and also by those who

belong to the other asramas. Worship of Ganesa is done first in all ritualistic ceremonies. Lord Ganesa has a place in alomst all temples of Lord Vishnu, Siva, Devi, etc., and He is worshipped first before one starts worshipping the presiding Deity of the temples. He is the remover of all obstacles on the path of the devotee both secular and spiritual. In the Ganapatyupanishad Lord Ganesa is described as the Absolute himself. This is the case with all other divinities also, and therefore, one should not commit the mistake of considering them as lower to and different from the Supreme.

Some years back a high school boy by name Rama Sarma living in the city of Madras, a worshipper and devotee of Aditya, the sun-god was in the examination hall to answer the arithmetic question paper. He was very weak on this subject and being conscious of his weakness, became nervous as is common with many weak-minded students. Suddenly he remembered his tutelary deity sun-god and closing eyes for a few seconds prayed: "O Lord, if only you help me to answer this arithmetic paper today satisfactorily, I will perform a puja in a grand scale tomorrow morning." A few minutes passed, the bell rang, he was given the question paper and to his great relief and happiness, the questions were found to be very easy and he answered all the questions correctly. His happiness knew no bounds. Keeping the answer book separately, he got an additional answer book and prepared a long list of articles to be purchased for the worship of the sun-god next morning. The total cost exceeded Rs. 100/-. He read the list again. A thought arose in his mind that the cost was a little too much. He there- fore prepared another list in another sheet of the additional answer book reducing the number of items and also their quantities. The total worked out to less than Rs. 50/-. Thinking that this also was beyond his means, he prepared a third list on a fresh sheet of the additional answer book. This time the total cost had been reduced to Rs. 20/-. He was not willing to spend even that amount. Suddenly the Upanishadic statements came to his mind. The sun-god

is really the Absolute Himself. He is everything and He is the Sat-chit-ananda. How could he worship the Absolute!

It is impossible because He is transcendental. All pujas and rituals are not for the Absolute which the Sun-god is. He said to himself: "Meditation on the Absolute is better than all worship of the lower deities and from tomorrow onwards I will start meditation on the Absolute." While thus musing, the bell rang, the examiner came and collected the answer books. Our Rama Sarma also gave the book. The other one he folded and put it into his pocket. The boy left the hall very happy, happy to have answered all the questions and also for having cleverly and intelligently saved Rs. 100/-, the original estimate for the worship of the sun-god. But as soon as he reached home he was shocked to find that it was the answer book in which he had rightly answered all the questions which he had in his pocket. What happened was that when the bell rang and the examiner came to collect the answer books, instead of giving the answer book, in the hurry of the moment, he gave the additional answer book in which he had prepared the different estimates or the puja which he had finally abandoned.

The Lord is in the heart of all of us. He knows our most secret thoughts. Any upasana, worship and meditation on any of the deities is helpful to purify the mind and prepare it for the dawn of brahma-jnana, the supreme Knowledge which is non-different from the Absolute. Such upasanas should be done with utmost faith (sraddha). They not only bestow the fulfilment of desires here and here- after, but also help the attainment of the ultimate Liberation.

53. SAMVARGA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE ALL-ABSORBENT)

Instructions on this samvarga-vidya are contained in the fourth Chapter of the Chhandogya-upanishad, in sections 1 to 3. The master who imparted this vidya was rishi Raikva and the disciple who received it from him was king Janasruti. samvarga means the process of all-absorption. This vidya gives the knowledge of the all-absorbing one, the Supreme Being, the ultimate Subject who absorbs, as it were, all, the objects. rishi Raikva is referred to in the Upanishad as Raikva with the cart. Evidently he might have been a poor man in the worldly sense, earning his livelihood by pulling a cart and spending the remaining time living under the cart itself which served as a roof preventing sun and rain. King Janasruti was reputed for his scriptural know- ledge, charity, kind-hearted nature and all other virtuous qualities. He had every right to be proud of himself and he naturally thought that he was the greatest man in his country. One night his egoism received a great shock. He was lying on his cot on the terrace of his palace, when two birds, (hamsa birds or swans-the word 'ham.sa' also means one who identifies oneself with the Supreme) flew over him. From their conversation, he came to know that there was a person named Raikva with the cart who was immensely superior to him and before whom he was nothing. So, in the morning, having searched for Raikva and found his place of residence, the king went to him to get initiated into that knowledge which Raikva possessed and which he him- self did not have and which was the cause of Raikva's superiority. In the traditional manner, he took with him large presents for being offered to the guru, in the form of cows, gold necklace, chariot and the like. He was first refused. But, the king being a sincere and true seeker after Truth, did not take it as an insult. He again went to Raikva whom he had accepted as his spiritual master, a second time, this time with more wealth and with his own young daughter for being offered to the Sage to serve him, in return for the knowledge

which he sought for from him. This convinced the Sage about the sincerity and earnestness of the king-disciple and the great intensity of his aspiration. He agreed to initiate him. This knowledge which rishi Raikva imparted to king Janasruti is known as samvarga- vidya, meditation on the All-absorbent, the Supreme.

The great absorber in the universe is air or wind that blows, which is a symbol here for meditation on Brahman. It is god vayu also referred to as matarisva in the Keno- panishad (III-2-ix) where he says: "I can blow away all this that is on the earth". The vayu blows everything, sucks every bit of matter. When fire goes out and flames are extinguished, it is vayu that absorbs them. When the sun and moon set, it is vayu that absorbs them. It is the cosmic wind that is referred to here which moves the planets and the stars in the heaven in their own orbits. The Brihad- aranyaka-upanishad says that it is out of the fear of this mighty Being, the sun, the fire and everything including death, discharge their functions properly. It is this that is referred to by the name vayu which is to be meditated as Brahman. This is from the standpoint of the macrocosm.

The microcosm which is essentially non-different from the macrocosm, is taken up next for instruction. This is with reference to the individual body. Here, it is prana which is to be meditated as the great Absorbent. When one is in deep sleep, all the organs including the mind are absorbed in prana. vayu and prana are the two expressions of the same hiranyagarbha in the macrocosmic and micro-cosmic aspects respectively. They are to be meditated as the two samvargas, the two great Absorbents, the two manifestations of the cosmic Person, hiranyagarbha. The two should not be kept separate in meditation, but should be brought together and envisaged as one Reality. This is the samvarga-vidya imparted by the great rishi Raikva to the king Janasruti. This is nothing other than brahma-vidya.

In describing the result that one attains through this meditation, an anecdote is given in section 3 of the Upanishad. One brahmacharin, a

celibate student who practised this samvarga-vidya felt that he had become one with the cosmic prana. One day he went for alms to a house. There two learned and wise persons were being served their lunch. Their names were Saunaka and Abhipratarin. When the student begged for some food, it was refused. They wanted to test his knowledge. The student did not move to another house as is wont with ordinary students of Vedic knowledge and monks who, when refused in one house, silently without any protest, move to the next house. This student who had identified himself with the cosmic prana, said: "O great ones, please hear what I have to say. There is one supreme person. As vayu he swallows up fire, sun, moon and water, all the elements in the universe, and as prana he swallows all the organs such as speech, eye, ear, the mind and all the rest in this body. He is the protector of all the worlds. He disguises himself in all these umpteen names and forms and, therefore, the ignorant people do not rcognise Him. It seems that you two also are ignorant about Him. All food is meant for that one God, and so your refusing food for me is tantamount to refusing food to that God. Please know that this celibate student now standing before you has practised samvarga- vidya and as a result of this meditation has identified himself with that God who is none other than hiranyagarbha, the Self-born, the cosmic prana. Beware of the serious consequences of your sinful action."

When the two wise persons Saunaka and Abhipratarin heard these words from the brahmacharin, Saunaka reflected over the words for some time and then replied as follows: "O brahmacharin, now hear from me what I have to say on this great subject. You seem to think that we are ignoramuses. You are mistaken. I will tell you how we have meditated on the Supreme Truth. Please listen carefully. We have meditated on that great Self who is the Self of all gods, the creator of all beings and the destroyer of every- thing. During creation He projects himself as all beings such as water, fire and other deities. During dissolution He absorbs them back within Him, assuming the

form of cosmic prana. When the individual sleeps, remaining as prana in him, He absorbs all the organs such as speech and the rest. When the individual wakes up, He projects them again. He has undecaying teeth, for he never gets tired of destruction. He goes on chewing everything and swallowing them through the mouth which is Knowledge. His teeth shine through Knowledge. The greatest wonder is that, though he eats everything, He cannot be eaten by anything. All eaters are eaten by Him. His glory is unlimited and indescribable. O brahmacharin, please know that this is the God whom we meditate. Now we give you food. Please satisfy your hunger."

From the viewpoint of the student, the action of the two persons in refusing food first when he begged for it, was not right. But from the two others' standpoint, they wanted to test him and having satisfied themselves, they served him with food. Their reply seems to suggest that their meditation is superior to the samvarga-vidya practised by that student. In the latter, there seems to be the division of the macrocosmic and microcosmic aspects, as vayu in the former and prana in the latter. The great ele- ments in the universe are said to be absorbed in vayu and all the organs in the individual in prana. It might be with the good intention of correcting the student and instructing him further that he should, in this meditation, do away with this difference or division between the macrocosmic and microcosmic aspects, that the two wise persons acted as they did. In the samvarga-vidya, though one may start with the two aspects as different, finally transcends the two and attains the one cosmic Person hiranyagarbha where- in there is no possibility of even the least division or separation.

The result of meditation is becoming one with hiranya- garbha, saguna-brahman. This is gradual liberation, krama- mukti.

In mantras IV-1-iv and IV-3-viii, there occurs the word krita, when they speak of the result of this meditation. krita is the name of one of the four yugas, ages, also called satya-yuga the others being treta, dvapara

and kali. The period of krita yuga is inclusive of the period of the other three. Scriptures say that kaliyuga extends to 4,32,000 human years, dvapara consists of twice kali, i.e., 8,64,000 years, treta, thrice, 12,96,000 years and krita, four times kali which comes to 17,28,000 years. Altogether the four ages extend to 43,20,000 years. krita-yuga is, therefore, said to contain in it all the four- 1 plus 2 plus 3 plus 4, i.e., 10. In the dice play, there are four sides in the cast each marked 1, 2, 3, and 4 which altogether make 1 plus 2 plus 3 plus 4 equal to 10 which includes all the four. The 5 gods in the macrocosm and the 5 organs in the microcosm together make up 10. Another way of arriving at the same number 10 is as follows: In the case of gods, fire, sun, moon and water make 4; fire, sun and moon make 3; fire and sun make 2 and fire is 1. Their total is 4 plus 3 plus 2 plus 1 qual to 10. Similarly, in the case of the individual, speech, eye, ear and mind make up 4; speecch, eye and ear make up 3; speech and eye make up 2; and speech alone is 1 and altogether these also make up 10. Thus, krita represents the totality which is virat, the food. He is the All-Absorbent, All-Consumer. One who meditates on Him identifies himself with that All-Absorbent Being. All dis- tinction vanishes. The eater and eaten, the subject and object coalesce into that non-dual Being.

54. SATYAKAMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION TAUGHT TO SATYAKAMA)

This vidya taught to Satyakama Jabala, (Jabala's son by name Satyakama), by Gautama, son of Haridruma, occurs in the Chhandogya-upanishad in sections 4 to 9 of chapter IV. The story, through which the instructions are imparted, says that the young boy Satyakama directed by his mother Jabala approached Gautama and prayed for initiation into brahmacharya, the life of a celibate student of sacred Knowledge under the master. He was initiated by the Master after satisfying himself that he was a fit student for initiation. The teacher then selected four hundred lean and weak cows and asked the boy to take them to the nearby forest and tend them properly. The boy in strict obedience to the teacher, took them to a place where good fodder and water were available in plenty and tended them. Even while taking them, he took a vow that he would not return to the Master till the four hundred cows multiply into a thousand. After many years, his vow was fulfilled and he found that there were one thousand hefty and healthy cows with their calves. All these years he was having only one thought, the thought of fulfilling his Master's desire. This penance of sincere, selfless service to the Master with sraddha, for a long period, had its effect of purifying his mind. When the mind was thus purified of its dross in the form of likes and dislikes, love and hatred, and similar negative, demonaic qualities, it became fit to receive the higher knowledge of Truth.

It is said that one day the god of air, associated with the directions, entered into the body of the bull and said to Satyakama: "O dear boy, now that we have become one thousand, you have fulfilled your vow and you can, therefore, take us back to the house of the Master. I shall also instruct you on one foot of Brahman". The boy re- cognising the manifestation of the Lord in the bull, said:

"O Lord, I shall now take you to the Master's house. Please do instruct me as promised".

The deity of air said: "The eastern quarter is one fourth part of the one foot of Brahman. Similarly, the western quarter, the southern quarter and the northern quarter are each one fourth part of this one foot of Brahman. This one foot of Brahman with the four parts, has the name the Manifested. Meditate on this one foot of Brahman". The result of this meditation is attainment of name and fame in this world and also the attainment of higher manifested worlds.

Then, the deity of fire entering into the holy fire of his daily worship, instructed on the four parts of the second foot of Brahman, viz., the earth, the intermediate region, the heaven and the ocean. The name of this second foot is endlessness or eternity. One who meditates on this, attains endless and eternal worlds.

Next, the deity of the sun entered into the body of a swan and instructed on the third foot of Brahman. He said that the third foot consists of the four parts which are fire, sun, moon and lightning and bears the name effulgence. The meditator on this third foot of Brahman be- comes effulgent and attains all the effulgent worlds.

The fourth quarter or foot was instructed by the deity prana entering into the body of madgu, a kind of diver bird. prana said that the fourth foot of Brahman consists of the four parts, viz., vital force, eye, ear and mind and its name is ayatanavan, possessor of abode. The result of meditation on this fourth foot of Brahman is attainment of extensive worlds.

Satyakama following the above instructions meditated and attained the results of all the four meditations. Any one who meditates thus also will attain the same results, says the Upanishad.

Satyakama got the knowledge of Brahman with four feet, each foot consisting of four parts, altogether sixteen parts. They are the four

quarters, east, west, south and north; the earth, sky, heaven and ocean; fire, sun, moon and lightning; and prana, eye, ear and mind. He identi- fied with the manifested, became eternal, effulgent and also became eligible for all the higher worlds.

The sixteen parts are indicative of the external and internal worlds-the vast gross world of names and forms and the subtle world of thoughts, feelings and imagina- tions. All are the manifestations of Brahman. They are not different from one's Self, the Atman. This truth Satya-kama realised, through meditation coupled with intense, unshakable faith (sraddha) in his Master. His selfless service of the master in the shape of tending cows, resulted in the purification of his mind which enabled him to practise medi- tation, which in turn resulted in the dawn of the Knowledge of Brahman.

The story says that he reached his Master's house with the thousand cows. The Master was very much pleased seeing his cheerful countenance brimming with peace, that peace born out of meditation on Brahman, and spiritual effulgence born out of freedom from all desire and fear. He remarked: "O my dear boy, you shine like a knower of Brahman; who instructed you?" The boy informed all that happened, and it is said he prayed for a direct initiation by the Master himself. This the Master gave with great joy. Thus, Satyakama became the knower of the suguna-brahman. Any one who practises this vidya which goes by his name Satyakama, also will certainly attain the same result, viz., gradual liberation, through the knowledge of the Manifested Brahman. He finally realised the ultimate truth that God, the pure Consciousness dwells in all beings, not only in the sentient but also in the insentient objects like stones, bricks and even in minute sand particles, even in atoms and in sub-atomic particles. This 'dwelling' is not like a man dwelling in his house or bird dwelling in its nest. It is like gold dwelling in a bangle or the thread dwelling in cloth. Just as in the bangle there is nothing other to gold and in a cloth there is nothing other to thread, even so, there is nothing other to God in all

the beings. One day the famous saint Sai Baba of Shiridi in South India, who was staying in a Masjid was absorbed in some thought and suddenly a smile appeared on his face. His disciple Sri Upasani Maharaj was nearby and Baba put a question to him. In your temple does any man come to you! This disciple was living in the outskirts of Shiridi in a dilapidated temple. Everyday he used to go to Baba for Darsan. He used to feed Baba with food prepared by himself. Upasani Maharaj replied Baba's question in the negative. Baba then said: "I shall come to your temple now and then". Days passed. It was a summer day. The sun was very hot. Upasini Maharaj was taking the food to his Guru. On the way a black dog obstructed his way. It was very hungry and wanted some food to eat. Maharaj thought within him- self: "It is not proper to give food to this dog before my Guru takes the food". He did not give anything to the dog. He walked on. The dog after following him for some dis- tance disappeared. He walked on and reached the Masjid. There he met Baba eagerly awaiting the food.as soon as he entered the Masjid, Baba asked him: "What was the need to come as far as here in this terrible heat, when I already met you on the way". When Baba said these words, Maharaj remembered the black dog which accosted him on the way. He repented very much for his failure to see Baba in the dog. He remained silent. He remained silent. On another day, when Maharaj started as usual from his temple with the food, he saw near the compound wall a poor man, half naked standing and begging for food. Maharaj did not even look at that side, but hurriedly ran towards his Guru's residence, for he was already very late on that day. When he entered the Masjid, Baba said: "Today also you have un- necessarily taken the trouble of coming over here. I was standing near your temple itself and you did not even care to look at me". Baba continued: "I myself appeared be- fore you the other day as a black dog and today as the half-naked beggar. In all these beings, I the one Paramatman alone resides. I wanted to teach you the secret of the all-pervasive nature of God. He resides in all. You have to look

upon all with equal vision. God dwells in all beings. Re- cognise Him. Know Him and serve Him in all."

55. UPAKOSALA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION PRACTISED BY UPAKOSALA)

This vidya occurs in the Chhandogya-upanishad IV-10 to 14. It is imparted by Satyakama, the son of Jabala to Upakosala, son of Kamala.

The vidya is instructed through a story as in many other vidyas. The disciple by name Upakosala approached his Master Satyakama in the traditional manner, and lived with him along with the Master's other disciples, for a period of twelve years, serving the Master with all humility and sincerity by tending and worshipping the sacred fire of his Master. When the proper time came for the conclusion of the studies, the Master gave permission to return home to all the disciples except Upakosala. The ritual of sama- vartana, the formal conclusion of the study of the scriptures at the teacher's house, was performed to all except Upa- kosala. In spite of his wife's entreatment, the Master did not initiate Upakosala, nor did he give him leave to return home. The Master went away on a pilgrimage.

Upakosala was naturally disappointed and grieved. He thought within himself: "I have served the Master with all my might and have also tended his holy fire with utmost devotion. I have not offended any one so far in any matter. Why my Master has not initiated me alone? I shall not take any food from today onwards. I shall observe complete fast." He started fasting. The Master's wife pre- vailed upon him to take some food atleast to maintain life in the body, but in vain. Then, the fire gods whom he had worshipped daily--those presiding over garhapatya, anva- haryapachana (dakshinagni) and avahaniya-jointly and individually took compassion on the boy who had so sincerely served the Master by tending and worshipping them, and started initiating him into brahma-vidya, the mysteries of the Truth.

They all instructed together: "prano-brahma, kam brahma, kham brahma-the Vital Force is Brahman, Happi- ness is Brahman, Ether is Brahman".

The instructions for meditation given individually by the three fire-gods were:

"Earth, fire, food and sun are my body, the purusha seen in the sun is I and I am verily He"-thus instructed garhapatya fire. The dakshinagni's instructions were: "water, directions, stars and moon are my body and the purusha seen in the moon is I and I am verily He". The third among them viz., ahavaniya fire instructed: "Vital force, space, heaven and lightning are my body, the purusha seen in the lightning is I and I am certainly He."

The fire-gods also said that further instructions would be given by his Master when he returned from pilgrimage.

When the Master after finishing his pilgrimage came back to the house he saw Upakosala shining with effulgence like a knower of Brahman. After knowing the instructions of the fire-gods, from the boy, the teacher said: "O my dear boy, the fire-gods have instructed you about the meditation on the worlds alone. I shall now instruct you on the meditation on Brahman. Just as water does not wet the lotus leaf, the knower of what I now instruct, would not be touched by any sin." Then he instructed on akshi- vidya which is dealt with as a separate vidya.

According to the joint instruction of the three fires, one should meditate prana as Brahman. prana here is that special vayu which when it remains in the body, life conti- nues and when it leaves the body, life also leaves. This prana is to be meditated as Brahman. The usual meaning of the word kam is happiness, and that of the word kham is akasa (ether or space). Here, the two words qualify each other. Therefore, happiness does not mean the sense happiness, but ananda, Bliss; and akasa does not mean the elemental space but the Consciousness-space. Bliss is that which is Consciousness, and

Consciousness is that which is Bliss. Thus one should meditate the space in the spiritual heart, the seat of spiritual Bliss as Brahman, the Conscious- ness-Bliss.

The meditation on the world as instructed by the three fire-gods independently, helps the above meditation on the spiritual heart as Brahman. The instructions are to meditate on the worlds as one's own body. The purusha in the sun is 'T' and 'T' am that purusha; the purusha in the moon is 'T' and 'I' am that purusha; the purusha in the lightning is 'T' and 'T' am that purusha. This is a meditation by which one completely identifies oneself with the Supreme Being. Some say that God is this world, but the world is not God. They are also partially right in one sense. But, in that Supreme Truth there is no question of any difference as world and God. An often quoted verse which has been already cited in another context says: harireva jagat jagadeva harih harito-jagato nahi bhinna tanu; iti yasya matih paramartha gatih sa naro bhava- sagaram-uttarati-The Lord is verily this world, world is verily the Lord Himself, there is not even the least differ- ence between the two; he who has got this firm conviction of the true goal, that person crosses the ocean of trans- migration. Acharya Sankara in his monumental commentary on the Brahma Sutras says: "To this (the objection raised by the opponents), we say that the Supreme Lord is of course to be realised as one's Self. Thus it is that the Jabalas, while speaking of the Supreme Lord, present Him as identical with the Self in 'O blessed deity, I indeed am Thee and Thou indeed art me, O Deity'." (IV-1-iii).

As an eulogy and to encourage the neophytes, the Upanishad promises the meditator visible results, such as a glorious and full length of life, the continuation of his progeny and his own protection in this world, in addition to the invisible result of destruction of sins and attain- ment of higher worlds after death.

56. AKSHI-VIDYA AND ANTARADITYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE EYE AND THE INDWELLER IN THE SUN)

Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is of the view that antaraditya-vidya is the counterpart of the akshi-vidya, the cosmic representation of the same, through the combi- nation of which two, the meditation becomes complete or integral, and the conscious revelation of the Real is effect- ed through the merging together of the subjective and the objective manifestation of the purusha (Vide pages 46 and 47 of his book "Essence of Vedanta", second edition 1980).

In the akshi-vidya contained in the 15th section of the fourth chapter of the Chhandogya-upanishad, imparted by Satyakama Jabala to Upakosala, the meditation is to be done on the purusha that is seen in the eye as the Atman, who is immortal and fearless and who is Brahman. He is the seer behind the eye, through whom the eye is able to see. He is the Eye of the eye (Ke. Up. 1-2). He who inhabits the eye, but is within it, whom the eye does not know, whose body is the eye and who controls the eye from within is the Internal Ruler and one's own Self. (Br. Up. III-7- xviii). One should not mistake Him for the seeing agent which is the intellect, for it is said: "He does not see, though seeing He does not see, the vision of the witness is never lost because it is imperishable (Br. Up.IV-3-xxiii). Whenever He does not see anything separate from Him, it is due to the absence of a second thing separate from Him as in deep sleep and samadhi. The instruction given by Prajapati to Indra and Virochana says: "The person which is seen in the eye is the Atman, immortal, fearless which is Brahman" (Ch. Up. VIII-7-iv).

He is to be meditated as extremely pure. Even the eye in which He dwells is itself uncontaminated by what is poured into it, as a lotus leaf is not contaminated by water. Anything poured in the eyes flows out along the eye-lashes. If the dwelling place, the gross eye is thus

untaintable, the Person dwelling therein who is subtler than even space, must certainly be so all the more.

He should be meditated as devoid of destruction, and therefore, free from fear. That which has destruction or death alone has fear. He being pure Existence-Consciousness cannot brook any modification or destruction. He is the Self of even the modification, destruction and non-existence or void. How can this eternal infinite Being have fear which is the characteristic of finite mortal beings! For this very reason, He should be meditated as Brahman who is eternal and infinite without beginning and end.

Another attribute given to this attributeless purusha to help meditation, is that He is the storehouse of all auspiciousness. All good and favourable things and all blessings are in Him. He is the centre of all that is promising, favourable, advantageous, joyous and propitious. He is also the carrier or giver of all blessings, according to the merits of the receivers. Still another attribute is given to help meditation. He is the cause or bestower of luminosity in all the worlds. The sun, moon, stars, fire, lightning and all similar luminous objects get their luminosity from Him alone. "tasya bhasa sarvam-idam vibhati-By His light all this shines diversely"-says the Mundaka-upanishad (II- 2-x). If He withdraws His power, even the gods such as agni, vayu and others and even indra their chief become impotent and incapable of moving even a piece of straw. This fact is illustrated through the story of the yaksha in the Kenopanishad (vide saguna-brahma-vidya). The gods who were egoistic and proud for their victory over the demons, were instructed about the truth that their success was due not to their strength, but due to the power of Brahman.

The antaraditya-vidya is given in the Brihadaranyaka- upanishad mantra V-5-ii. It says that one should meditate on the Being who is in the orb of the sun and in the right eye of the meditator, as Brahman. The sun in the sky and eye in the meditator rest on each other. The Being in the sun rests on the Being in the eye through his rays, and the

latter rests on the former through His function of sight. This meditation should not be confused with gazing at the sun by the fleshy eyes. The meditation here is contemplation through a purified mind, on the Being within the sun as identical with the Being in one's own right eye. One sees objects through the eye because of sun's light. Thus the two, viz., the sun and the eye are connected. The Conscious- ness present in the sun is the same Consciousness that is present in the eye. This is the significance of saying that the sun is the pesiding deity of the eyes. There is really no inert object. Everything is vibrating with Consciousness. The 'thingness' in everything appears to cover the Consciousness in it. Through discrimination and meditation, this unreal veil should be removed, when everything will reveal its real nature of pure Existence-consciousness- bliss.

The Upanishad incidentally remarks that in a man who is about to die, the Being in the sun withdraws His rays from the eyes. Then he sees the solar orb shorn of its rays. The sun does not cease to emanate the rays, but continues to shine as before. The eyes of the dying man do not see the rays which hide the orb. He sees the orb clearly like the moon. Isavasya-upanishad, verse 16 gives a prayer to the sun by the dying man wherein he prays for the withdrawal of the rays of the sun, so that he may see clearly the most auspicious Person, within the sun (and not the orb of the sun) The sun gives passage to the regions beyond, to those who are eligible for krama-mukti.

The result of this meditation is gradual liberation. Whether the usual cremation rites are performed or not on the death of the person who practises this meditation, he goes through the Path of Light and attains krama-mukti. While living, all auspiciousness comes to him. He is blessed with all desirable objects. He shines in all the worlds. He is freed from rebirth in the present kalpa.

The seekers after Truth who want to practise the vidyas should not fogret the simple well known fact that what we think that we become. So there should be no doubt about the efficacy of meditation given in

the Upanishads. The end of concentration of the mind on anything is to become one with that thing. In a high school, the teacher was giving lessons to the students of the 10th class. He noticed that everyday during his period a particular student was not attentive to the lessons taught. The teacher found that student was thinking deeply on something else. The teacher one day after the class was over, called that boy and asked him: "What is the matter with you? You are not attending to what I am teaching here. Your mind seems to be else where. I am noticing this for the last so many days". The boy admitted the fault and said: "O Teacher, what you have said is true. I am at fault but I could not help it. Though I wanted very much to attend to the lessons, I find my mind is going to my dear bull in my house which I love so much." The teacher reflected for a few minutes and then told the boy: "My dear boy, I will suggest you a remedy. From this evening, you go to the nearby hill, sit there and think of the bull as long as you like". The boy in obedience to his teacher's advice, started going to the hill every day. He sat there and was thinking of the beloved, beautiful bull. No other thought disturbed his mind, because he had so much love for the bull. This went on for seven days. On the eighth day, he felt he had no more to think of the bull and so decided to attend the class. He went and waited outside the class. The teacher who was inside the class room asked him: "My dear boy, did you do as I instructed?" The boy replied: "Yes, my revered teacher. I did exactly as you advised. I was thinking of my bull alone for seven days. Now I feel that I need not think of it any more." Then the teacher said: "All right, now come in and take your seat and attend to your lessons." The boy replied: "O, revered teacher, I am unable to enter the class room, as my horns are too long and the door here is too small to allow me to enter the room." This is the result of constant concentration on the bull. The boy felt that he was the bull, which was his object of thought earlier. Such is the power of the mind. In the Upanishadic meditation, we are asked to meditate on the Self either directly or indirectly with or without the help of symbols. When our real nature is al- ready

divine, we can attain the goal more easily, by fixing the mind on the Self with the help of the symbols. The reason for the distraction of the mind and lack of concentration during meditation on God, complained by the neophytes on the spiritual path, is that they have some object or other more dear and lovable than God. The thought of that object which is stronger, naturally drives off the weaker thought of God. And they complain of lack of concentration. They must know that God on whom they have to meditate is the dearest and most lovable, more dear and more lovable than all the objects this world and even heavenly worlds can give. Then all distractions will cease and there will be progress in meditation.

57. VAISVANARA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE COSMIC PERSON)

The Chhandogya-upanishad gives the vaisvanara-vidya -meditation on vaisvanara, the cosmic Person-in its fifth chapter, sections 11 to 24. The instructions on this meditation are given through a story which expounds a doctrine for attaining freedom from the miseries of this mortal life, by meditating on the cosmic Reality.

Six great personages by name Prachinasala, Satyayajna, Indradyumna, Jana, Budila, and Uddalaka are the receivers of this vidya from Asvapati, the then king of the country known as Kekaya. The king was an adept in the vaisvanara-vidya and a knower of Truth. These six persons though well versed in the scriptures, well placed in life with all material wealth and enjoying worldly happiness as a result of their meditations, still found a lacuna in their life. They had no peace and real satisfaction in the core of their hearts, and they were ignorant of the next step to be taken by them in the spiritual path. They were in search of a proper teacher whom they found in king Asvapati who was a knower of Truth having practised success- fully the vaisvanara-vidya. All of them went to the king.

Seeing the six learned people, the king offered plenty of wealth thinking that the purpose of their visit was material wealth. But to his surprise, he came to know from them that they had approached him not for any wealth, but for the knowledge of vaisvanara. He readily agreed to impart it to them. As they were not raw, young brahma-charins, but aged, experienced meditators, the usual traditional rule of staying with the Master for a long period leading an austere life of celibacy and self-control, before one was initiated into the knowledge, was waived in their case. They declared themselves as disciples of the king who accepted the place of the spiritual Master.

Before starting his instructions on the vaisvanara-vidya, the king enquired and knew from them as to where they actually stood in their

path to perfection. All of them had practised meditation. One had meditated on the heaven as the Atman, another on the sun as the Atman, the third on air, the fourth on space, the fifth on earth and the sixth on water as the Atman. Though these meditations are good and beneficial as far as they go, they have the two-fold defect of limitation and externalisation. These defects were pointed out by the king to them. The Atman is the pure Subject without a corresponding object or objects. How can this Subject become an object of meditation, like the heaven, sun, air, space, earth and water! The unlimited has been limited, the Infinite has been finitised and the inner-most has been externalised by them in their meditation. The pure Sentience, the Consciousness Supreme has been made inert and unconscious objects as the heaven, sun, air and like. Parts have been mistaken for the whole. The finite has been misunderstood as the Infinite. The results that accrue from the meditation on finite and limited objects will also be finite and limited in the form of richness in ritualistic karmas and sacrifices, enjoyment of all sense-objects, affluent family life and effulgence born of the meditation. All this, all the six persons had in abundance. But, there was no redemption from this painful samsara which is figuratively represented in the Upanishad as loss of the head, loss of sight, loss of life, disintegration of the body, lameness and bursting of the bladder.

Having pointed out the defects of their meditation as also its benefits and the adverse results, the king instructed on the right method of meditation on the Atman in three aphoristic terms. He said: yastu etam-evam pradesa- matram abhivimanam atmanam vaisvanaram upasate, sah sarveshu lokeshu sarveshu bhuteshu sarveshu atmasu annam- atti-but one who meditates on the Atman as pradesamatra, abhivimana and vaisvanara, eats food in all the worlds, in all beings and in all the selves". The language used here is enigmatic and mystic and is therefore capable of different interpretations.

Scholarship alone is not enough to grasp the truth that lies hidden behind the words. The earnest aspirant should not deviate from his main aim and get caught in mere, useless intellectual arguments which are obstructions in his path. Arguments, reflection and ratiocination should be based on the scriptures. Argument should never be for mere argument sake or for defeating others who hold different views.

pradesamatra is He who is the whole, manifested thro- ugh parts such as, heaven, earth, space, and the rest. He is therefore to be meditated as the Universal, complete Whole, more extensive than space, with heaven as His head, the sun and the moon as His two eyes, the directions as His ears, the revealed Vedas as His speech, air as his heart, and from whose two feet all this earth is born (vide Mun. up. II-1-iv). The purushasukta describes him as the purusha having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thous- and feet, and after extending throughout the universe, still exceeds by ten fingers. The term 'ten fingers' is interpreted to mean infinite. All the known and the unknown are contained within Him. All the symbols chosen by the six persons such as heaven, sun and the rest are, therefore, only parts which they mistook for the whole, and hence, their failure to get full satisfaction and peace. But the parts are also His manifestations, partial expressions and hence, they were successful in attaining worldly wealth and prosperity which gave them temporary happiness.

abhivimana means Self-conscious. Consciousness is the very nature of the Atman, nay It is the Atman. Every- thing other to It is inert and non-sentient. It is He, the innermost Self who is known through the expression 'I'.

vaisvanara, cosmic Person is He who leads all men, who makes all men attain the results of their karmas, both the virtuous and the sinful. In other words, He is isvara, the Lord who is the Self in all.

The king said to those six persons: "All of you have been meditating on this vaisvanara who is the Atman in all, who is not distinct from you, as something external to you and distinct from you. While as the Atman in all, He is the eater of food and the doer of all other activities through the senses, you have been thinking otherwise and taking food through all the senses to satisfy your separate individual beings. Your knowledge is analogous to the knowledge of six blind men about an elephant. They used their organ of touch to get the knowledge of the elephant. How can they succeed in their attempt? The sense of touch can never reveal the form of any object or being. One man who felt the belly of the elephant, understood that the elephant was like a wall. Another who felt its tail, said that the elephant was like a broom stick. Similar was the case of the remaining four who used their sense of touch to know the elephant. None could get a complete concept of the elephant. Each of them touched only one of the limbs of the elephant and came to the wrong conclusion that it was the whole elephant. What they considered as the whole, was really only a part. Similarly, your meditation has led you to partial knowledge which is not the whole knowledge. The vaisvanara is the Atman in everyone of you, your own Self which can never be separate and distinct from you, which cannot. be external to you. He is not limited, for the whole heaven forms His head, the sun His eye, the air His prana, the space His trunk, water His belly and the earth His feet. Thus you should meditate on the vaisvanara as your Atman with- out limiting Him, and as Brahman without externalising Him".

Is not this meditation instructed by the king very difficult, almost impossible of practice? Yes, as long as we identify ourselves with our small body. When we consider ourselves as this body of ours the Atman cannot be meditated upon without limiting it as located within a body. Similarly, the whole universe cannot but be external to me as long as the 'I' does not disidentify itself from the body. When once the 'I' is separated from the body and It remains as pure Consciousness,

then the two defects of limitation and externalisation can be avoided. They disappear by them-selves. But is disidentification from the body an easy task? No To the non-discriminating one whose senses and the mind are extroverted and run riot searching for pleasures, this is also difficult, nay impossible. But, to the discrimi- nating sadhaka who analyses the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep and dis- covers the real 'T', it is not so difficult as one imagines. One should know what the real nature of the 'I' is. Besides one's own Self-effort, grace of God and one's own Master is highly essential to realise the real nature of this 'I'.

The following account of how the great sage Ribhu led his devotee-disciple Nidagha to the highest illumination, was once given by Bhagavan Ramana to his devotees: Though Ribhu instructed his erudite and intelligent disciple Nidagha on the highest Truth, the latter did not get sufficient convic- tion, and therefore, returned home and led a life of devoted, ritualistic worship. But the great devotion of the disciple to the Master and the Master's infinite love for the disciple continued as before. Ribhu, therefore, used to visit the disciple in his house to know how far he was progressing in his march towards the knowledge of Truth. Ribhu always used to go in disguise. On one occasion, he disguised him- self as an aged rustic, in torn cloths and went to see his disciple. He saw him watching the king's procession in front of his house. The 'rustic' asked him: "My dear young man, what is it that you are watching?" Nidagha replied: "The king's procession". Rustic: "But where is the king?" Nidagha: "There, on the elephant". Rustic: "I see the two, the king and the elephant; but which is the king and which is the elephant?" Nidagha exclaimed: "What! You are seeing the two, but you do not know which is the king and which is the elephant! The man above is the king and the animal below is the elephant. You seem to be a great idiot." Rustic: "Pray be kind to me, a rustic, an aged and ignorant man. One more doubt and that is this: You said, "he who is 'above' is the king and that which is 'below' is the

elephant". I have understood who is the king and which is the elephant. But I have not understood what you mean by 'above' and 'below'." Nidagha who had lost all patience burst out: "Words cannot convince you, O dull-witted man; I will explain the matter through action. Please bend forward and you will know what is 'above' and what is 'below'." The Rustic did as he was told. Nidagha climbed on his shoulders and sitting there as though riding an elephant said: "Now, know I am 'above' and you are 'below'. Is it clear?" Rustic: "One more doubt, my dear young man. Please bear with me. What is 'above' and 'below' is now clear to me. You said 'I' am above and 'you' are below. Pray tell me what you mean by 'I' and 'you' ". When Nidagha heard this, it is said illumination dawned in him, like a flash of lightning. He recognised his spiritual Master in the rustic. He jumped down, fell at his lotus feet and craved for pardon for the disrespectful way of his behaviour. Here, though Nidagha had heard a lot about the 'T' and 'you' and their identity as the Self before, from his Master, while he was staying with him, its realisation did not come to him then because of the obstruction in the form of ignorance, desire and action. This obstruction was re- moved by his upasana, devoted worship and meditation which he practised in his house. And the question put by the master, "What you mean by 'T' and 'you'?", at once caused the dawn of the knowledge of their identity, the identity of the subject and object which are mere manifestations of the non-dual Atman-Brahman. The highly illuminating instructions of sage Ribhu to his disciple muni Nidagha, which is like the jewel in the crown of Upanishadic wisdom, contained in Chapters V and VI of the Tejobindu-upanishad also can be read and re-read, reflected over and meditated upon with immense benefit, by the seekers.

The result of this meditation is identification of the meditator with the whole universe. When such a medita- tor is satisfied, the whole world is satisfied. This is ex- plained in the Upanishad through prana-agnihotra, well- known in the sacred lore and performed by the wise.

As a ritual, it is a sacrifice performed twice daily by the house-holder. Both the teacher, king Asvapati and the six disciples were house-holders. The Upanishad points out that this prana-agnihotra sacrifice is taking place daily in all individuals while taking food. Those who have no know- ledge of vaisvanara, wrongly think that the food they eat daily goes into the fleshy bag, the belly. But to the knowers of this vidya, taking food is a sacred offering to Lord vaisvanara. It is He who digests the food. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita: "Abiding in the body of living beings as vaisvanara associated with prana and apana, I digest the fourfold food" (XV-14).

The king instructs the disciples to meditate thus: The chest of the knower of vaisvanara is the holy altar on which the sacrifice is performed. The hairs on the chest are to be considered as the sacred kusa grass spread over the altar in the sacrifice. The heart is to be taken for the sacred fire known by the name garhapatya-agni, the mind as that fire which goes by the name dakshinagni, or anva-haryapachana-agni, and the mouth as that fire called ahavaniya-agni. Thus meditating, the daily act of taking food is converted into prana-agnihotra sacrifice. It is the traditional custom among those who follow the ritualistic injunctions of the Vedas, to offer the food to the five pranas with the chanting of mantras before starting to eat. (The five pranas are prana, apana, vyana, udana and samana.) To the modern men, these have become meaningless rituals. But to the knower of vaisvanara-vidya, they form a holy daily sacrifice, the prana-agnihotra, the sacred offering to the Supreme Lord manifested as vaisva- nara, the cosmic person. The five pranas are like the five tongues of the one fire in the ritualistic sacrifice. When prana is satisfied by the first oblation with the mantra, pranaya svaha in the form of food put into the mouth with the meditation that it is being offered to the vaisva- nara-agni, the eye is satisfied, as is seen from the glow in the eyes when one's hunger is satisfied. When the eye is satisfied, the presiding deity, the sun who is within the eye, who is the

eye of the cosmic vaisvanara is satis-fied. When the sun is satisfied, the whole of the heaven illumined by the sun is satisfied. Heaven being satisfied all that is under the heaven becomes contented and delighted. Through this the eater himself is satisfied as he gets all the desires in the form of offspring, cattle, food, wealth and divine effulgence born out of this wisdom, the know- ledge that he is non-different from the universe. When he is happy the whole world is happy.

Similarly, with the second, third, fourth and fifth offerings to the vyana, apana, samana and udana, satis- faction to the whole world and himself is effected. Thro- ugh the second oblation, vyana, the ear, moon, quarters, all that is under the quarters, i.e., the four directions east, south, west and north, the eater and the whole world are satisfied. Through the third morsel of food taken, apana, the speech, fire, earth and all that is under the earth and the eater and the whole world get complete satisfaction. When the fourth morsel is taken as the offering to this vaisvanara-agni, samana, mind, panjanya (rain god), lightning, all that is illumined by lightning as also the whole world including the eater, are satisfied. In the fifth oblation of the food into the mouth, udana, air, space, all that is under the air and space, viz., the whole universe including the eater, are satisfied. Thus eating of food rightly performed with this sacred knowledge of vaisva- nara, results in contact with that cosmic Deity who himself has manifested as the universe. He who meditates thus gets control over the whole universe, even even as one has control over his own limbs of his body. This is said to be a master stroke of the Upanishad, an unfailing penacea for all ills of this human earthly life. Here, the food taken through the mouth is indicative of all forms, sounds, smells and touches taken in through the other organs, viz., eyes, ears, nose and skin as also all actions done by the organs of action. All these are to be meditated as offerings to the Lord vaisvanara.

The Upanishad says that if any one without knowing this performs the daily agnihotra sacrifice, it would be use- less. This is to be taken as eulogy on the prana-agnihotra. When one knowing this, performs the daily ritualistic sacrifice, it produces universal satisfaction. His sins are destroyed as a straw is burnt by fire. If such a knower of the vaisvanara-atman offers a little remnant of his food to any one, let him be the most degraded one, that becomes his offering to the cosmic vaisvanara.

A beautiful simile is given by the Upanishad in this connection. As hungry children gather round their mother, even so, all beings wait upon this meditator, as he has be- come the mother to the whole universe. One who success- fully practises meditation on the Cosmic purusha as his own -Self and the Self of all, fulfils all the aims of human life and nothing more remains to be done by him.

While dealing with the subject of the sameness of meditations coming in the various Upanishads and in several places in the same Upanishad itself, the Brahma Sutras lay down in Sutras 1 to 4, in the first topic of the third section of chapter III, that in similar meditations, a combi- nation of all the traits or attributes given in the various places about a particular vidya should be made by the meditator while practising that particular vidya. To illustrate this, the commentator Acharya Sankara refers to the combi- nation of the attributes of the vaisvanara-atman conceived of in Br. Up. I-1-i as extending from heaven to earth, and the same conceived of in Chhandogya-upanishad V-18-i, as one's innermost Self. This fact should not be forgotten by one who takes to this meditation on the vaisvanara-atman, although here in this book the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra referred to is treated as a separate vidya under asvamedha vidya.

58. SAD-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON EXISTENCE-ABSOLUTE)

This meditation occurs in the Chhandogya-upanishad, chapter VI, sections 1 and 2. Sage Uddalaka instructs his son-disciple Svetaketu on this meditation. Svetaketu who is sent to a teacher's house for study at the age of twelve, returns after completing the formal Vedic lessons at the age of twenty-four. He is conceited and has the egoistic notion that he has masterd all the Vedas and that he is perhaps even superior to his father. He is now arrogant in his conduct. Noticing this, his father, the great sage Uddalaka, puts the following question to him: "Dear boy Svetaketu, did you ask your teacher for instructions on That by know- ing which what is unheard becomes heard, what is un-thought becomes thought of, what is unknown becomes known? And if so, what is the answer he has given? Please let me know." The boy had not asked for this knowledge, nor had he been instructed on it. He admits his ignorance, becomes humble and prays to his father for instructions.

By knowing one thing, how can all other unknown things be known? By knowing a table can all the rest of the objects in this world be known? By knowing one object how can all the umpteen objects of the universe be known? It seems to be strange and mysterious. Seeing the sur- prising look of Svetaketu, the wise father first tells him that such a thing is possible. He gives a few examples. By knowing a single ball of clay, all articles made of clay become known, for all such articles are clay only with different names and forms. Clay alone is real, the names and forms are superimpositions on the clay by the mind, and therefore, unreal. In a pot or a jar made of clay, is there anything other than clay? Is there such a thing as a pot or a jar different and separate from and over and above clay? No, for when clay is removed, the pot and jar are not there. The other two examples given by Uddalaka are a single bar of gold and the several ornaments made out of it, and a single piece of iron and the several instruments made of iron. When

the boy is convinced of the possibility of such a knowledge, the father gives this meditation on Sat, the Existence-Absolute.

"sadeva somya idamagra asit, ekameva'dvitiyam- dear boy, all this was Existence alone, in the beginning before creation, one only without a second." This is said in the two mantras VI-2-i and ii and a possible objection is raised and answered. The objection is that some say that in the beginning, before creation, all this was non-existence (asat) alone which was one only and non-dual and that from that non-existence all this has come out. This objection is re- futed on the ground that existence can, on no account, come out of non-existence. Nothing alone can come out of nothing. Something has to come out of something. In the Bhagavad-gita II-16, the Lord says that non-existence (asat) has no existence and Existence (sat) has no non-existence. To say that non-existence existed before creation to give birth to existence is, on the very face of it, illogical.

Before creation, this universe was asat, non-existence -says Chh, up. III-19-i and also Tai. up. II-7-i. In both the places, the term asat is interpreted as 'the unmanifested', and not as complete non-existence. So, the Upanishads say that this world remained in an unmanifested state before it became manifested into all these umpteen names and forms. How can there be complete non-existence? To say non-existence exists is to admit existence. If any one says non- existence does not exist, non-existence is itself non-existent, Thus the question of then he has to accept existence. complete non-existence at any time, is completely ruled out and the eternal existence of Sat is proved.

In several of the meditations dealt with in Upanshads, the meditator is instructed to superimpose something superior on something inferior, and to meditate on the latter as the former. In all these cases, both the entities-the super- imposed one and the one on which the superimposition is made-come under finite, limited objects with attributes.

But in this sad-vidya, one is asked to meditate on That when there is no world, That before creation, when there could be no objects either, gross, subtle or causal. An extremely purified mind alone can attempt this meditation.

What exists in deep sleep? One should try to know that in the waking state. There was no the so-called real, physical, gross world of the waking state, nor the so-called unreal, mental, subtle world of the dreaming state. Then what exactly was there? Was it complete non-existence (asat)? Can we call the content of that state nothing? There was no 'thing', it is true. There was no object gross or subtle to be grasped by the mind and to be called 'this' or 'that' as we have in the waking and dreaming states. But nobody can deny existence of oneself in deep sleep which fact is proved in the waking state by the cognition of the absence of discontinuity or break in oneself's existence. Everyone after waking says 'I had a good sleep'. Without the existence of the experiencer 'I', the experienced which is here 'a good sleep', and the proces of experiencing, the above statement could not be made. They must have been there. Yes, they are there, not as the triad, but as one homogeneous Consciousness. All the three have coalesced into pure Aware- ness freed of all objectivity and, therefore, subjectivity also. There is pure Existence, sat alone then.

Similar is the case before creation. Why similar? It is the same 'condition', the same 'state'. It is this sat, Existence Absolute that creates as it were, the world, manifests itself as it were, expresses itself as though, as the world-the three states of experience, waking, dream and deep sleep.

Just as we cannot say that there is either night or day in the sun, we cannot say that before creation there was (is) either existence or non-existence. Here we, once again, draw the attention of the aspirants to the famous nasadiya sukta which has tried to express this inexpressible Truth. The transliteration of the sukta occuring in

Rigveda X-129-i to vii with a very crude gist of the seven mantras, is given below:

1. nasadasit no sadasit tadanim nasid-rajo no vyoma paro yat,

kimavarivah kuha kasya sarman ambhah kim-asit gahanam gabhiram.

2. na mrityur-asit amritam na tarhi na ratrya aha asit praketah,

anidavatam svadhaya tad-ekam tasmat ha anyat na parah kimchanasa.

3. tama asit tamasa gulhamagre apraketam salilam sarvama idam,

tuschhyenabhvapihitam yadasit tapasah tanmahina- jayataikam.

4. kamah tad-agre samavartat-adhi manaso retah pra- thamam yad-asit,
sato bandhumasati niravindan hridi pratishya kavayo manisha.

5. tiraschino vitato rasmir-esham adhah svidasi't upari svidasit,

retodha asan mahimana asan svadha avastat praya- tih parastat.

6. ko addha veda ka iha pravochat kuta ajata kuta iyam visrishtih,

arvag-deva asya visarjanena'tha ko veda yata aba-bhuva.

7. iyam visrishtir-yata ababhuva yadi va dadhe yadi va na,

yo asyadhyakshah parame vyoman so anga veda yadi va na veda.

Before creation there was neither Being nor non-being, neither space nor that which is beyond space. What was there was a cover! Where was it! Was there any enjoyment! Were there the deep unfathomable waters! There was neither death nor immortality. There was no sign of day or night. That Supreme One who is breathless breathed by its own power. Other than that there was nothing beyond. We may say thereafter there was darkness or there was the cosmic waters. All this manifested world was like indistinguishable waters, the primordial cause (maya) which enveloped the emerging reality of the world. Then

it manifested itself by the divine will. Thereafter, there arose desire, the first seed of the mind. The desire to create arose when the seeds of karmas of beings in the past cycle ripened. The Sages seeking in their hearts through intution (meditation) discovered the connection between being and non-being-the kinship of the Being in the non-being. Now a severing line appeared transversely and it was difficult to say which impulse was above and which power was below. There were begetters and mighty forces. Who really knows! Who can tell whence it was born and whence this creation! Even gods came after its emergence! Then who can tell from whence it arose! Does that from which this creation arose, support it or not! He who is the eternal witness in the highest heaven verily knows it, perhaps He also knows not.

As already pointed out earlier, it cannot be non-existence. But to say it is existence would be in a way limiting that Infinite Being. Hence the sukta denies both. He alone IS, and hence, the sukta puts it in the pithy form, 'He verily knows it', for none else other to him exists, 'perhaps He knows not', for the very same reason that there is nothing else to know.

Though to a neophyte in the spiritual path this may appear to be very near to nihilism, it is far, far from it. It is on the other hand, the Supreme Full, the Infinite, the Whole, the purnam occuring in the 'purnamada, purnamidam.... in Br. up. V-1-i (vide purna-vidya).

There is no valid proof for the complete non-existence before creation. Is there any proof for Existence? No, for all proofs (direct perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, presumption and non-apprehension) come into existence only after creation. How can these proofs (prama-nas) prove That which is before creation! But the scriptures, the guru and one's own direct experience are there to support Existence (sat) before creation. The first two affirm with all the force at their command, that sat alone was before creation and the third, viz., direct experience, experience without the intervention

of the mind of the aspirant, in which there is no triad of the experiencer, the experiencing and the experienced, affixes the seal of confirmation.

The question of the young Nachiketas of the Kathopanishad to the great preceptor who is none else than the Lord of Death, the Lord who presides over that state of the non-existence of the world, is about That before creation, the sat dealt with in this vidya. All the Upanishads unanimously proclaim sat, the Existence-Absolute as existing before creation and continuing to be the same without changing even after creation, during the exist- ence of the world. This world when separated from the sat due to ignorance is proved beyond doubt to be phenomenal, an illusory appearance like the mirage water, a ghost in a post, a snake in a rope, silver in nacre and similar unreal appearances. This sat continues to be the same sat after dissolution also. The state after dissolution and that before creation mean one and the same, as creation, existence and dissolution are cyclic.

It is significant that Acharya Sankara does not mention of upasana in the sixth chapter of the Chhandogya- upanishad dealing with this sad-vidya and the mahavakya tat-tvam-asi. It is perhaps due to the fact that the whole chapter deals with jnana, the Supreme Knowledge. upasana and jnana are supplementary and they are not opposed to each other, nor are they like watertight and airtight com- partments separate from each other, one having nothing to do with the other. We may not be wrong if we say that upasana and jnana are identical in essence, as both are meant by the word vidya. The result of upasana may be stated to be the revelation of the ever-revealed Brahman by removing, as it were, the unreal avidya. As the Isa-vasya, Katha, Mundaka and other Upanishads say, both avidya and vidya come under the conditioned. vidya destroys avidya, even as a false offering satisfies a false ghost, and as a false tiger in a dream wakes up the dreamer after destroying the false dream-world and itself.

The result of this meditation is, says Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, that it enables one to assert the Reality of the sat-aspect of the Absolute whose essential nature is sat-chit-ananda, a compound word in Sanskrit, all the three component words therein referring to the one, non-dual Absolute.

59. TAT-TVAM-ASI MAHAVAKYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE GREAT SENTENCE THOU ART THAT)

The Chhandogya-upanishad (VI-8 to 16) declares: "sa ya esho'nimaitad-atmyam-idam sarvam tat-satyam sa atma tattvamasi' svetaketo iti-the whole universe has "That' the quintessence of all essences as the Atman, That is the Reality, That is the Atman, "Thou Art That', O Sveta- ketu". This declaration 'tat-tvam-asi-Thou Art That' is brahmopadesa-vakya, the sentence which is in the form of instruction on the identity of one's Self with the Self of the universe. It is generally known as upadesa-vakya, the sentence which instructs the Truth, or sravana-vakya, the the sentence to be heard from one's guru. In the words of Gurudev, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, it is the greatest declartion ever made on the face of the earth. It is the profoundest teaching ever given since the dawn of creation. It is the only way of expressing and indicating the Truth that is beyond the reach of the mind and the senses. It is the one unique teaching that comforts the distressed humanity and infuses inner spiritual strength and courage into them to pooh-pooh the miseries and pains of mundane existence and to soar high into the realm of non-dual, all-blissful, eternal Existence. This sentence is simple in the words that it employs. But, it requires a well polished, sharp intellect of an advanced aspirant to under- stand the subtlest Truth that it wishes to convey. If it be unostentatious in its expression, it is at once majestic and imperative in its utterance. If it be brief, blunt and aphoristic in its declaration of the highest Truth, it readily gets instilled deep in our hearts and from within it mysteriously raises our consciousness to that non-dual, eternal plane of pure Existence. Thus concludes Sri Gurudev.

The question raised in this connection in the Upanishad is what is that through the knowledge of which what is unheard becomes heard, what is unthought be- comes thought of and what is unknown becomes known.

These three are indicative of all other forms of knowledge through the sense organs also. The subject that is under instruction is shown as that which is generally considered as beyond the realm of all the organs including the internal apparatus called the mind consisting of the subconscious, the thinking faculty, the intellect and the ego, is really directly perceptible.

What the preceptor Uddalaka Aruni instructed his son Svetaketu previously as an introduction to this final instruc- tion of the mahavakya, may be recapitulated here to facili- tate easy understanding. Since the 'effect' in essence is nothing but the 'cause' in a modified form, all bodies are nothing but food, because they have come out of food which is nothing but the earth. The earth is nothing but water, for water is the source from which it is produced. And water is but fire only, as the element fire is the cause of the element water. Lastly, the element fire is traced to its final cause, the sat, Existence-absolute. In deep sleep, every one merges in the sat. This sat is the substratum for the phenomenal universe, even as a rope is said to be the sub- stratum for the illusion of the snake. When a man dies, his speech dissolves itself in the mind, the mind in prana, the prana in fire and the fire in the sat. Thus Svetaketu was instructed that sat is the ultimate cause of the universe as well as the individual jiva, and then given this great in- struction "Thou Art That', meaning 'you are essentially the sat, Existence--Absolute'. The son was not able to grasp completely the meaning of this dictum. He raised several doubts and the father cleared them with sound reasoning, suitable analogies and practical experiments as is done in modern scientific laboratories. He brought the seed of a banyan tree and dissected it. When the son said that he could see nothing inside, the father rejoined: "O my dear son, that the most subtle thing inside that small seed, which you do not see-it is from that this yonder big banyan tree has grown up and is now standing before you. You must have utmost faith (sraddha) in my words. Similarly, all this in the universe has the subtlest Atman as its

essence, and That alone is the Reality, and Thou Art That". Again, he asked Svetaketu to bring some water and put some salt into it, and when the whole of the salt had dissolved, he asked the son to search for the salt in that water. The son could neither see the salt with his eyes, nor could he feel its presence through the sense of touch. The father then showed that the presence of salt in the water, which was not perceivable to the two senses of sight and touch, was cognisable to the sense of taste, as every drop of that water had the saline taste. The salt did exist in salt-water even though non-perceptible to the organs of sight and touch. Similarly, the subtlest essence in the body, though incapable of being known through the senses and the mind, can be realised with the help of scriptures and the preceptor. In this manner, the father cleared all the doubts of the son and he was made to repeat the mahavakya nine times. This removed all the obstacles that clouded the intellect of Sveta- ketu and prevented a clear grasp of the import of the maha- vakya. The truth then flashed in the heart of Svetaketu, the Truth which is beyond the import of all words and sentences. Even to this day, this age-long practice of repeating the mahavakya nine times and explaining the im- port, is followed by the spiritual preceptors at the time of initiating their disciples into the sannyasa order. The disciple repeates the mahavakya 'aham brahmasmi-I am Brahman' each time the preceptor instructs tat-tvam- asi.

Meditation on tat-tvam-asi is similar to the meditation on aham-brahmasmi. For that matter, meditation on the other two mahavakyas occuring in the Aitareya and Mandukya Upanishads, also is similar to this meditation, because they also express the same truth, the identity of the individual jiva and the Supreme. They are prajnanam- brahma (Ai. up. III-1-iii) and ayamatma-brahma (Ma. up. 2). The words 'team' in tat-tvam-asi, 'aham' in aham-brahmasmi, 'prajnanam' in prajnanam-brahma and 'ayam atma' in ayam- atma brahma, refer to the individual Self and the words 'tat' and 'brahma' in them refer to

the supreme Self. The verbs 'asi' and 'asmi' signify the identity of the two entities.

In the two vakyas which have no connecting verbs, the verb 'asti' signifying identity is understood.

Advaita Vedantic texts explain how the seeker has to arrive at the final import of the sentence tat-tvam-asi. They prescribe three methods: (1) samanadhikaranya, (2) vise- shana-visishya bhava, and (3) lakshya-lakshana samban dha. samanadhikaranya is co-ordination of the two terms tat and tvam. The conditions to be satisfied are that the two terms should have the same case ending and that they should not be synonyms, but should have primarily two different imports. When these conditions are satisfied, the initial divergence in the meanings of the two words is re- moved and the sentence would then assert identity. Here, the word tvam primarily means 'you', the disciple, the jiva which is a mysterious complex of the pure Consciousness with ajnana, nescience, and the reflection of the pure Cons- ciousness in the ajnana. The primary meaning of the word tat is a similar complex of the pure Consciousness with maya and the reflection of the Consciousness in maya. Through the process of what is known as the jahad-ajahad lakshana, i.e., rejecting a portion of the primary meaning and retaining the remaining portion, we reject the ajnana and the reflection of the Consciousness therein from the primary meaning of the word tvam and retain the pure Consciousness. We do the same thing with the word tat. We reject the maya and the reflected Consciousness, and retain the pure Consciousness. Thus both the words tvam and tat have now the same meaning which is pure Consciousness. Thus they are equated. This equation is not like equating two objects which have different or similar characteristics where equality is only a mental imagination and not a fact. The equation in the mahavakya is the same as identity of the Infinite with Infinite itself, the Absolute with the Absolute. This identity encompasses all existence and non- existence and it is the 'experience'

of the indivisible, unified Whole indicated by the expressions purnam, bhuma and the like.

The second is viseshana-visishya bhava, i.e., the relation of the qualifier with the qualified. The meaning of tuam qualifies the meaning of tat and the meaning of tat qualifies the meaning of tuam. To the meaning of tuam which is the Self, the Atman, is attributed Brahman-hood which is the meaning of tat. Similarly to Brahman, the meaning of the word tat, is attributed Atman-hood which is the meaning of tuam. Brahman-hood removes from the Atman, the finitude which generally attaches itself to the Atman, and Atman-hood removes from Brahman the indirectness which generally goes with the concept of Brahman.

In the third, lakshya-lakshana sambandha, i.e., indirect indication, the primary meanings of the two words which are contradictory are given up and the implied meanings are construed. The primary meaning of tvam viz., the individual person, the transmigratory self subjected to pain and misery, is rejected and the word is given the implied meaning which is pure Consciousness. Similarly, the word tat generally means isvara, the creator, sustainer and des- This meaning is set troyer of the phenomenal universe. aside and the implied meaning which is pure Consciousness is given to the word tat. Thus both the terms, through implication, get identity.

Thus the two terms tvam and tat have mutual co-ordination, their meanings have mutual relation, and their meanings point through implication, the Supreme, non-dual Consciousness which is the final import of the sentence as a whole, an import which is beyond the meaning of any of the words constituting the sentences, separately or conjointly, and also beyond the literal meaning of the sentence as a whole.

An enquiring intellect retaining its individuality, which has not grasped the import of the mahavakya, may raise the question: The sentence

tat-tvam-asi is after all a sentence consisting of words. All the processes enunciated for understanding its hidden import are all intellectual, and therefore, fall within the realm of ignorance, within the framework of space, time and causation. As such, how can they bring about the ultimate release of the individual jiva and take him beyond the realm of ignorance? The question may look quite logical. But no fully satisfactory logical answer can be given to it, because Reality-Absolute is beyond all human logic. When the spiritual seeker equipped with the necessary qualifications such as discrimination, dispassion, all virtues and intense aspiration for liberation abandons through the neti, neti method (vide neti, neti-vidya) all all that is non-self here, including his own body, mind, intellect and the ego, then arises in that seeker, the question: "If I am not any of these, what am I then?" To this last question which none can answer, because there is none to answer as he has negated everything in the universe and in himself, every- thing starting from the body and ending with the ego, the Sruti, the most compassionate Mother of all, more compassion- ate than a thousand parents, which is non-different from the Self, answers tat-tvam-asi-Thou Art That. The Truth is within the 'heart' of everyone and acts as the preceptor of all preceptors and reveals Itself when the seeker empties himself completely. Then the Infinite fills the Infinite as it were. The Atman which was Brahman even before, as though realises that It is Brahman.

"Thou Art That', therefore, really means "That is That'. But when we put it in this latter form, it seems to make no sense. Therefore, the Upanishad has given it as "Thou Art That'. That within you and That outside you, That which is everywhere and at all times is one and the same-this is the meaning. What the Upanishad wants is to eliminate completely, root and branch, all difference and distinction. So the import is quite different from the merely grammatical meaning of the sentence. The result of this vidya is sadyo- mukti, immediate Liberation.

60. BHUMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SUPREME PLENITUDE)

This vidya is unique and it is thrice blessed. In the first place, the preceptor who imparts the vidya is bhagavan Sanat- kumara who is omniscient, who is said to be Lord Skanda. He is also known by the name of Kartikeya and Subra- manya. Secondly, the receiver of this vidya is no other than deva-rishi Narada, one among the mind-born sons of Brahma himself. And thirdly, the vidya itself is the summit of spiritual knowledge. To quote again Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, he says: "this is perhaps the greatest of all the Upanishadic vidyas, for it sums up the entire result of all philosophies and philosophic enquiries."

The term bhuma, a novel term used in the Chhandogya- upanishad, means the Supreme, the Absolute, the Plenum, referred to by other epithets such as om, tat, sat, Atman and Brahman.

The Vidya is revealed in the Chhandogya-upanishad, chapter VII, through a story which says that Narada after qualifying himself in all branches of learning a long list of which is given in mantra VII-1-ii, finds no real peace and, therefore, approaches the divine Sanatkumara and prays for the Supreme Knowledge. Narada admits his ignorance of the Atman in spite of his vast erudition, scholarship and mastery of all subjects. He completely surrenders himself to Sanatkumara who then starts his instructions.

Sanatkumara begins by saying that all that Narada has studied is merely name alone. All names are superimpositions on the paramatman, the Absolute. When that param- atman, the Supreme Self is realised as one's own Self, one gets peace and transcends all grief and sorrow.

Sanatkumara instructs Narada to meditate on name (nama) which alone is all this phenomenon. Narada meditates accordingly on name

as Brahman. Name, speech and idea together are usually considered as inseparables. Just as one worships God superimposed on an image, Narada superimposes Brahman on 'name' and practises meditation. He attains, as the result of this meditation, freedom to act as he wishes in the sphere to the extent of and within the reach of name. This result does not give the satisfaction desired by Narada. Therefore, he goes to Sanatkumara and enquires whether there is anything superior to name, fit for the realisation of the Absolute. The master suggests meditation on speech (vak) which is superior to name, be- cause it is through speech that everything here and here-after is known. If speech were non-existent, no one would be able to know anything. Further, speech is the cause and name is the effect. Cause is always superior to the effect. This meditation on speech which Narada practises brings him freedom of action in the spheres within the reach of speech. This also brings no satisfaction in Narada. Again he goes to Sanatkumara who instructs him to meditate on the mind which pervades both speech and name. Under the able guidance of the divine Sage Sanatkumara, Narada proceeds stage by stage. After identifying with the mind, he next meditates on will, then on intelligence, contemplation, understanding, strength, food, water, fire, ether, memory, aspiration and finally prana, vital force which surpasses all and which is all-pervasive like the thread in a garland of beads where the beads are also made of thread. In the universal aspect, prana is hiranyagarbha, the cosmic intellect mind and vital force.

Narada at this stage of his sadhana, when he identifies himself with hiranyagarbha, mistakes this universal state of mind, intellect and prana for the ultimate goal and refrains from further questioning and enquiry about that which is higher than prana, as he has been doing so far in the earlier stages of his meditation on name, speech, etc. This mistake is likely to be committed by aspirants also. Many may mistake the state that they attain in the early stages of their meditation, due

to the individual ego's expansion into the universal, as the final state of Liberation. Some in their ignorance stagnate at the state of laya, trance, thinking that this is the ultimate Goal. Still others take visions and sounds which appear during meditation for the Self and remain stuck up in that stage. The Upanishad warns the aspirants against such deceptions of the mind. The Upanishad says that noticing Narada's false satisfaction, the compassion- ate teacher Sanatkumara who has found a most worthy and fully qualified disciple in Narada, wishing to take him right up to the pinnacle of Self-realisation which is beyond hiranyagarbha, urges him to proceed further with his enquiry about Truth. Here, the word Truth refers to the Absolute.

Narada now most humbly prays for initiation into the Supreme Truth. This part of the story reveals the secret that great masters expect sincere students to put questions to them at every stage. This would serve a double purpose. One is that such questions, asked with all humility and with the only aim of attaining the highest Truth, give satisfaction to the teacher that the student has been following him and has raised himself to his (teacher's) level of consciousness and is fit to receive further instructions to rise still higher. The second one is that it is a proof of the earnestness and the intensity of the student's aspiration for the ultimate knowledge. Healthy and proper questions put by the students are always a source of joy to the masters who are anxious to initiate the disciple into the highest Truth.

Narada prays: "Lord, I desire to understand the Absolute, please instruct me." Sanatkumara now enunciates six items of sadhana, qualifications to be perfected at this stage. They are vijnanam (higher understanding, understanding the sat-chit-ananda aspect and not the name and form aspect), mati (reflection), sraddha (firm attachment to Truth), nishtha (steadfastness), kriti (control of mind and senses), and sukham (the resulting peace). A doubt may arise whe- ther or not the great sage Narada possesses all these qua- lifications which are expected of even a beginner in the spiritual path and which come

under the fourfold qualifi-cation of discrimination, dispassion, all virtues and intense aspiration. It is true that he possesses all these and that too to that limit of almost complete perfection. But to attain the state of the Absolute, 'almost complete perfection' in qualification is not enough. Even the least shortage or deficiency will be an obstruction at this stage. Absolute is Perfection, and Perfection demands perfection in qualifications.

Having risen up to the almost super-human level of consciousness, the cosmic consciousness of hiranyagarbha, without any this-worldly or other-worldly desire, with the only desire for the Atman, Narada with all humility asks: "Most revered bhagavan, kindly condescend to initiate me into sukham, the Bliss Absolute." Now bhagavan Sanat-kumara reveals the Supreme Truth in the following words: "yo vai bhuma tat-sukham na'lpe sukham asti bhumaiva sukham-that which is Infinite is alone Bliss, there is no Bliss in anything finite, the Infinite alone is Bliss."

Again requested by Narada for further instructions, Sanatkumara explains and says: "bhuma is that in which one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else. That which is bhuma is alone immortal. But that in which one sees something else, hears something else, under- stands something else, is the finite which is mortal."

"On what is bhuma established?"-is the next and last question of Narada. bhagavan Sanatkumara answers: "sve mahimni yadi va na mahimni iti-bhuma is established in Its own glory, or not even in its own Glory". In this context, we may again refer to the great Ashtavakra Samhita (also called Ashtavakra-gita) wherein King Janaka after listening to the instructions of Sage Ashtavakra, says that he (Janaka) who has realised the Supreme state which is beyond duality and non-duality, abides in sva-mahimna and exclaims the majestic Peace which he is, where nothing else is cognised, in the following six verses (Ch. up. XIX-2 to 7):

1. kva dharmah kvacha va kamah
kva cha'rthah kva vivekita,
kva dvaitam kva cha va'dvaitam
sva-mahimni sthitasya me.
2. kva bhutam kva bhavishyadva
vartamanam-api kva va,
kva desah kva cha va nityam
sva-mahimni sthitasya me.
3. kva cha'tma kva cha va'natma
kva subham kva'subham tatha,
kva chinta kva cha va'chinta
sva-mahimni sthitasya me.
4. kva svapnah kva sushuptir-va
kva cha jagaranam tatha,
kva turiyam bhayam va'pi
sva-mahimni sthitasya me.
5. kva duram kva samipam va
bahyam kva'bhyantaram kva va,
kva sthulam kva cha va sukshmam
sva-mahimni sthitasya me.
6. kva mrityur-jivitam va kva
lokah kva'sya kva laukikam,
kva layah kva samadhir-va
sva-mahimni sthitasya me.

In these six verses King Janaka tries to express the in- expressible, tries to describe the indescribable experience-less Experience. He says: For Me who abides in My own Glory, where is piety or desire, wealth or discrimination, duality or non-duality; where is the past, present and future, or eternity, where is space; where is the self and the non-self, the good and evil, anxiety and non-anxiety; where is waking, dream, deep sleep or turiya, where is fear or fearlessness; where is nearness and distance, outside and inside, gross and subtle; where is life and death, the world and the worldly relation, where is merging of the mind and samadhi!

The Upanishad says that bhagavan Sanatkumara then explained the greatness and glory of bhuma. The Divine Master says it is not like worldly greatness such as wealth, family, servants, name and fame on which people depend for their greatness. The greatness of bhuma is That. That (He) alone is below and above, behind and in front, in north and south and is all this. The word "That' (He) which is a pronoun in the third person, may cause misunderstanding that bhuma is something external to one's Self. To remove this possible misconception in Narada, the teacher says that bhuma is the 'T' in all, which alone is below and above, be- hind and in front, in north and south and is all this. To avoid Narada's mistaking the 'I' for the individual ego, Sanatkumara again says that this very bhuma is the Atman in all, who alone is below and above, behind and in front, in north and south and is all this. The expressions "That', 'He', 'T', and 'Atman' indicate only the one, non-dual Absolute. It is the subject and object at once, even as the room space and the atmospheric space are always one only, whether the walls of the room exist or not.

There is no causal relation or any other relation between bhuma and its glory or greatness. bhuma is self-supporting, self-effulgent, self-determined, being Perfection itself. The question as to its support put by Narada is almost un- warranted although it gives an opportunity to Sanatkumara to explain It further. No amount of explanation can

exhaust the glory of the Lord. Even if the goddess of learning herself writes for eternity, using the whole of the universe as paper, all the oceans as the ink, the heavenly tree as the pen, the glory of the Lord cannot be exhausted-says the great devotee Pushpadanta in his Siva-mahimna stotra.

During the instructions, Sanatkumara says that Bliss cannot be had from anything finite and it can be had only from bhuma, the Infinite. That which we call happiness or pleasure and which we try to get from objects, is not real but an imagination of the mind as in the case of dream pleasure. The source of even that is bhuma, the infinite ocean of Bliss. The greatest sense happiness is like the dis- tracted reflection of a ray of the happiness of bhuma. All happiness has its source in bhuma. Happiness is neither in the object, nor in the mind, nor in the contact between the two. The source is bhuma, otherwise called the Atman, the Self. When the desired object is obtained and enjoyed, the desire for that particular object ceases for a moment, and in that very short interval between the cessation of that desire and the rising up of the next desire which follows on its heels immediately, the Atman's Bliss is reflected. This we call sense happiness. The next moment, it is ob- structed by some other modification of the internal organ.

The result of this vidya is stated thus: He who sees the bhuma thus, reflects over It thus and realises It thus, has happiness, delight and union with the Atman. He be- comes the Self-sovereign. He has God-experience. He is the most supreme and unique. He is indescribable and unthink- able by the ignorant, even as bhuma is indescribable and ununderstandable by them. He alone has real freedom un- limited and unrestricted by space, time and causation. He is again free from the three kinds of differences, those among beings in the different species, those among beings in the same species, and those intrinsic in the same being. He is beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. He remains as the witness, nay transcends witness- hood also. He is free from the three bodies, gross subtle and causal, and

transcends the five sheaths-the food, vital force, mind, intellect and bliss. He is the Atman in all, from hiranyagarbha, the cosmic purusha, down to the sub- electronic particle. He is the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss- Absolute. He is completely illumined by perfect knowledge. and liberated from the false bondage. He realises that he has all along been the Absolute and the whole universe is the Absolute alone and naught else exists. He has rooted out his six enemies in the form of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy. The six waves of the mind in the form of grief, confusion, hunger, thirst, old age and death have completely subsided in him. The six modi- fications of the mind such as birth, growth, existence, change, decay and death are no more in him. Really he has no name though he is called jivanmukta or videhamukta. He is Brahman.

61. DAHARA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SMALL HEART-SPACE)

According to Brahma Sutra III-3-xxxix, traits like true desire, true resolve etc., mentioned in Chhandogya-upanishad VIII-1-v are to be added on to the traits such as birthlessness, controlership, lordship and rulership enumerated in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra IV-4-xxii, and those mentioned in the latter are to be added to the former, for purposes of meditation on the Small Inner Space as Brahman. So, the relevant mantras in both the Upanishads are dealt with here. Acharya Sankara in his commentary on the sutra, says that though it is possible to point out some difference between the Chhandogya-upanishad mantra and the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra, both the Upanishads speak of one and the same meditation and the meditator should therefore combine the attributes mentioned in both the Upanishads in his meditation. The attributes for the un- qualified Supreme Brahman should be interpreted as glorification of Brahman. He also adds that the qualified Brahman is the same as the unqualified Brahman.

The mantras in the Chhandogya-upanishad VIII-1-i to v say that in this body, the city of Brahman (brahmapuri), there is a mansion (heart) in the shape of a small lotus and in that lotus there is a small (dahara) inner space, the Atman. This 'Small Inner Space' is verily as large as the outer space and both heaven and earth, fire and air, sun and moon, lightning and stars, in short whatever there is in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained in It. When this body becomes old and perishes, the Atman-Brahman referred to by the epithet 'Small Inner Space' does neither become old nor does it die. This Space is the city of Brahman. It contains all desires. This is the Atman free from evil, old age, death, sorrow, hunger and thirst. Its desire is of the truth and its resolve is of the truth. Some are of the view that the Chhandogya-upanishad mantra 'syamat-sabalam prapadye', etc., (VII-13) pertains to this dahara-vidya, and that it is for japa or dhyana.

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra says that the infinite, unborn Self which identifies with the intellect and is surrounded by the organs, lives in the space within the lotus of the heart. This Self is the controller of all, the lord and ruler. It does not become better or worse through good or bad karmas respectively. It is the protector of all beings. It is the dam (setu) that serves as the boundary to keep the different worlds apart.

In this vidya, the small space in the heart is to be meditated as the Self, Brahman wherein is situated all the worlds and the beyond. A mystery indeed, the little space inside the small heart to contain the billions of universes and the vast limitless space and beyond! Everyday, we dream and the dream world is as vast as this waking world with all the limitless space, the starry sky with its sun, moon, planets, etc., etc. Where are all these contained if not in that little space within the small heart! So, it is not impossible for the Heart-Space to contain the whole cosmos within It. The apparent impossibility and illogicalness arise only when, we interpret the word 'Heart-Space' as the reduced size of the vast outer space. On the other hand, when we understand the word to mean the Spiritual Space or the Spiritual Centre, the pure Consciousness, wherein the whole dream universe exists, the statement of the Upanishads becomes easy of grasp for meditation. It is said that the famous temple of Lord Siva at Chidambaram the akasa-kshetra in South India, is a symbolisation of dahara-vidya.

chidambaram is the name of a town. The word chid- ambaram means Consciousness-space. The presiding deity in that temple is Lord Siva as akasa-linga. He is both in his manifested and unmanifested forms. In the sanctum- sanctorum, there is the murti or form of the Lord Nataraja, the Great Dancer, the Cosmic Dancer, symbolising the truth that this cosmos is the Dance of the Absolute, as it were, a vibration or self expression of Consciousness. By the side of the sanctum-sanctorum, there is another room which remains closed and locked. That is said to contain within the chidambara-rahasyam-the supreme

secret of the Lord, the Space-Consciousness. All worship is done to the Nataraja idol and people who go for worship generally see this alone and return. To those who desire to see the chidamabara- rahasyam alone, will be shown the content inside. The room will be opened by the priest who goes into it with a small wick lamp. It is an empty room, dark within. The priest enters into the room and just raises the lamp in his hand and says: "Lo, see the secret, this is the secret". Immediately he puts out the lamp, comes out, locks the door and goes away. It is an empty, dark room without any 'thing', symbolising the un- manifested form of the pure Consciousness.

Some say that this meditation on the heart-space is an alternative to those who cannot comprehend completely the Truth revealed in the just previous vidya, bhuma vidya. Though the neophyte in the practice of this dahara-vidya, may take resort to the help of the physical organ which goes by the name 'heart', he has to leave it off very soon and switch on to the spiritual centre, the centre of Conscious- ness wherefrom the whole of the dream world which includes his own dream body with its intellect-mind-organs-equip. ment, springs up, exists for some time and dissolves. It is from the very same Centre that the waking world with its space, time and objects including the body-mind complex of the meditator also springs up, appears to exist for some time and merges back into it in deep sleep, exactly as in the case of the dream world.

All possible arguments and counter-arguments that may be raised in favour of interpreting the word 'the small inner space' in the heart, to mean the material space or subtle ether or the individual jiva identified with the intellect, have been raised and discussed in the Brahma Sutras 1-3-xiv to xxi. And it has been clearly established therein beyond doubts, that the Upanishad refers only to the Supreme Brahman by the words 'Small Inner Space'. The location of the heart inside the body is given only to help the beginners in medita- tion. As

meditation progresses, one leaves off all the limita- tions of space, time and object and becomes one with that infinite Being.

What is referred to by the term 'Heart' is the Atman itself. The Upanishad states that It does not become old with the body, nor does it die with it. It is free from sin and merit, pain and pleasure, good and bad, and all similar pairs of opposites. It transcends all duality and all triads such as, the seer, seeing and seen; knower, knowing and knowledge; and so on. Whatever It wills or desires, materialises instantaneously without any effort. This fulfil- ment of all desires is simultaneous and not one after another. Being itself the material and instrumental cause of everything, including time, space and causation, these factors do not obstruct the meditation and realisation of the Truth in any way. Everything that is conceivable and even those not conceivable by the human mind are in that Atman referred to as the 'Small Inner Space'. The more the meditator goes nearer to this Heart-Space, through his meditation, the more control he has over the whole universe. At the last stage, when he attains It and when he is merged in It, then the distinction between meditator, the process of meditation and the object of meditation ceases.

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra which identifies the Atman in this Heart-Space with the intellect says 'It is the Controller, Lord, Ruler and Protector of all'. That Upanishad as also the Chhandogya compare the Atman to a dam or embankment which protects vast areas of cultivated lands from floods. It is also like a boundary to keep the different worlds apart, not allowing one to collide or strike against another. It also serves as a bridge, a connecting link among the infinite number of objects. Remaining as the all-transcending Absolute beyond the senses and the mind, It becomes the immanent Being in all, from the great creator- god down to the most insignificant blade of grass.

In meditation, in the place of this body with its heart, one can substitute anything right from this vast cosmos down to the smallest

atom or sub-atomic particle. Taking the cosmos one finds the heart-lotus inside is its spiritual centre and the Small Inner Space' within is Brahman. We will not be wrong if we say that Brahman is within an atom, and within the atom are the billions of universes each with infinite number of atoms. The so-called subject and object which are really one but differentiated as two due to ignorance, now re- gain, as it were, their original undifferentiated state. This is figuratively referred to as the fulfilment of all desired objects. Though this fulfilment begins as a psychological feeling, it finally ends in Spiritual Experience.

To the meditator who practises this vidya all desired worlds come to him by his mere wish. Readers should not forget that just as this waking world is naught like the dream world, all other worlds are also naught, everything being the Absolute alone. Just as a tree is one whole, although we may call the stem, branches, leaves, etc., as separate parts, even so all the worlds are really the one Absolute, though they are referred to as different worlds. The meditator after death attains all the worlds he desires. The worlds being within his own heart, they contact him at his mere will. If the meditator wants to fulfil any desire, such as to see his forefathers, friends and relatives who were sources of joy to him during their life in this world, they become associated with him by his mere wish without any other effort, as his desires are unfailing. He has no ruler or controller above him and he is, therefore, free to move everywhere and satisfy all his desires without the least effort.

The Upanishad in this connection makes mention of satya (Truth) and anrita (untruth). The former is beyond time, space and causation, 'the thing in itself', which is, and the latter is all that is within the phenomena. There are what are called 'distant' and 'near' in the realm of un- truth and those who are attached to this phenomenal realm, are not able to see the dead forefathers in distant worlds and are able to see only those who are near. The so-called distance between the

various worlds is as unreal as the distance between the dream world and waking world, and yet one in the dream state cannot contact one in the waking world and vice versa. The knowledge of the 'Heart-Space' solves all these seemingly unsurmountable difficulties as though created by the ignorance of the Truth and attach- ment to the untruth.

It is said that through this meditation the meditator who dives into the 'Heart-Space', as it were, can see, if he wills, all that was in the past, all that is in the present and all that is to happen in the future. This knowledge is available to all, but those who do not practise meditation do not know, even as people may walk over their own field ignorant of the fact of the existence of a buried treasure there covered by the earth, under their very feet.

62. UTTAMA-PURUSHA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE SUPREME PERSON)

"ya atma-apahatapapma vijaro vimrityurvisoko vijighat- so-apipasah, satyakamah satyasankalpah so'anveshtavyah sa vijijnasitavyah sa sarvamscha lokanapnoti sarvamscha kamanyastam-atmanam-anuvidya vijanati-iti ha prajapatir- uvacha-the Atman which is free from sin in the form of dharma and adharma, free from birth, old age and death, free from sorrow, free from desire, hunger and thirst, whose desire is all truth and whose resolve is all truth-That should be sought, and one should desire to know That. He who has sought for and realised the Atman, attains all the worlds and fulfils all the desires-proclaimed prajapati, the Creator, the Lord of all beings." Thus summarising the gist of the whole of this vidya, the seventh section of the last chapter of the Chhandogya-upanishad begins. It then gives further instructions on this meditation in the rest of the mantras in that section and in the succeeding sections up to the 15th, with which the eighth and the last chapter of the Upanishad concludes. Here is an interesting story which as in many other meditations, helps the aspirants to grasp the instructions with a certain amount of ease. This meditation is as difficult as any other meditation and requires the aspirant to pay the full price for what he expects to get out of it, viz., Self- Sovereignity. The price is in the form of self-control, the control of the senses and the mind through righteous living under the direct control of his spiritual master. This meditation results in the dawn of spiritual wisdom which in its turn destroys the nescience, ajnana. The result of this meditation is perceptible and can be experienced in the form of jivanmukti.

The story says that this great proclamation of prajapati was heard by both the celestials and the demons. Both being the children of the Lord, are like brothers, but always in war with each other. Both desired to attain all the worlds and fulfill all the desires, and therefore,

determined to seek for the Atman the knowledge of which is the means therefor. Indra, the chief among the celestials and Viro-chana, the chief among the demons, without the knowledge of each other, secretly went to the presence of prajapati, as disciples, in the traditional way with sacrificial fuel in hand to get the Knowledge. Through the story, the Upanishad here points out very clearly to the aspirant-world that what- ever be their status and position in the world, be they as great as the kings of the celestials or of the demons in control of the three worlds, they should be humble and obedient when approaching the teacher for the Supreme Knowledge. It also shows that this knowledge is superior to everything, before which all the wealth together with their enjoyments in the three worlds, is a mere straw.

For thirty-two years Indra and Virochana lived in the palace of prajapati, as disciplined and celibate students aspiring for sacred Knowledge. Thereafter prajapati enquired the purpose of their visit and knowing that they had come for the sacred knowledge of the Atman, instructed them thus: "The Atman about whom I declared and whom you desire to know, is that Person seen in the eye by those Yogins whose vision is introverted and who are free from the defects in the forms of likes and dislikes and the rest".

What prajapati meant was the Supreme Person who is the Seer behind the eye, the Eye of the eye, as described in the Kena-upanishad, who sees and yet does not see, who sees everything, himself not being seen by anyone, who gives power to the eyes to see objects and without whom the eyes and other organs will not be able to discharge their duties. But both Indra and Virochana because of their delusion and non-discrimination, misconstrued the instruction. They thought the reflection seen in the eye was itself that Supreme Self. It is the body that is reflected in the eye. Then they wanted to know whether the Atman was that which is seen reflected in water and in a mirror. prajapati asked them to go and look in a pan of water and report their

experience. They did accordingly and reported that they saw themselves exactly as they were from the tip of the toe to the crown of the head-with long nails and hair and beard, presumably because they had no shaving during the thirty- two years of life as celibate students. The Father then directed them to look at the water after a clean shave and adornment. They obeyed and came back and reported that they saw the reflections also as clean shaven and well adorned. prajapati said: "This is the Atman, the immortal, the fearless; This is Brahman."

What prajapati said is greatly significant. It is too deep to grasp. Whatever we see is God, the Atman-Brahman. This statement is true as well as untrue. It depends on the way in which it is understood. It is true as meant by prajapati, but untrue as understood by Indra and Virochana.

Both of them returned happy and contented, thinking that they had known the Atman. The fact is that they completely misunderstood the instruction of their father and Guru.

Virochana went home and told his followers, the demons: "I have known the Atman from my father. He told me what is seen in the eye is the Atman. The body is the Atman, and therefore, it should be adored and worshipped. It should be protected at all cost and provided with all sense pleasures." This is the doctrine of the crass materialists and sensualists, which the demons are. Their misunderstanding goes to the extent of worshipping the body even after its death. They decorate and adorn the corpse and try to preserve it as long as possible, for to them it is the immortal Atman.

Indra, the king of the celestials reflected over what prajapati said, even while returning home: "How can this mortal body be taken as the immortal Atman? The reflection of the body seen in the eye has all the characteristics of the body. When the latter is adorned it is also adorned, when groomed it also appears as groomed. Even so, when

the body becomes blind, the reflection also becomes blind and when crippled it is also crippled and when it perishes the reflection also is no more. I have not understood properly what my father has said. I see no good in my present knowledge". He, therefore, dissatisfied and with fear, remorse and sorrow in his heart, went back to prajapati with the necessary articles of worship as a humble disciple.

prajapati hearing his doubts, asked him to live for an- other thirty-two years as a brahmacharin of self-control and rigorous discipline which alone could remove one's delusion. At the end of the period, when Indra's mind had been purified to a certain extent as a result of the life-divine led by him for sixty four years, prajapati initiated him into the next stage, wherein the defects of the body do not affect the Reality, viz., the dream experiencer. The previous instruction was about the experiencer of the waking state. The dream body is not affected by whatever happens to the physical body. Though this Atman of the dream seemed to be satis- factory for the time being, Indra found, on further medita- tion, that it also has several defects. It appears to experi- ence pain and pleasure, feels as if it is killed, as if it is chased by a tiger or a thief, and therefore, there is no good in the dream-Atman either. Thus thinking, he again went back to the father, dissatisfied with this knowledge. The father again asked him to live another thirty-two years of continence and penance.

Purified by the disciplined life for a further period of thitry-two years, Indra became qualified for the next higher stage. prajapati instructed him on the Atman of the deep sleep state, who is not affected by the defects of the waking body and the dream body and who is fully composed and serene without pain and sorrow. Though this also seemingly satisfied Indra, for some time, on continued meditation he found out that the experience of deep sleep could not satisfy the characteristics of the Atman proclaimed by prajapati. "In deep sleep it is all darkness, ignorance, a big zero, as it were. There one knows neither oneself nor others. There is as though complete annihilation

in that state. This is also no good". Thinking thus, Indra went again to his father for further clarification of his doubts. This time prajapati asked him to live for only five more years of brahmacharya. Thus the great Indra, the king of the celestials, the lord of the three worlds with so much power and understanding, had to live a life of continence and meditation for one hundred and one years before he got himself initiated into the Supreme Truth. What about ordinary mortals, weak in body and mind and with dull intellect and tossed hither and thither by passions and desires! How long should they practise meditation!

prajapati now said to Indra whose mind and intellect had been purified by upasana for one hundred and one years: "I have instructed you on the Atman as the person who is seen in the eye in the waking state, who moves about in the dream state and who is in the deep sleep state. I shall instruct you now on the same Atman. This time you will completely grasp the Truth, as your mind has been cleansed of its dross in the form of likes and dislikes and their con- comitants such as anger, jealousy, crookedness and the rest. Please listen with attention.

"The Atman in the eye, is the seer in the waking state, the experiencer of the dream state and the serene and com- posed being in the deep sleep state. To you this Atman seems to be perishable and therefore no good, because you are identifying yourself with the body, gross, subtle and causal, which is perishable. You must know, O Indra, that this very body itself is the support, as it were, of the bodiless, deathless, partless, attributeless Atman. It is also the place of sport and enjoyment for the Atman. Further, it is by remaining in this body that one knows and realises the Atman. It is said that the Atman entered this body in the form of sat and remains there. For this reason also, the body is called the support for the Atman. This body which is always under the firm grip of death, is created from the result of virtuous and sinful karmas, and therefore, is ever associated with the attributes of likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain. The Atman to whom this body thus be- comes a support, seems to be with a body,

possessed of body, mind, intellect and the rest. This Atman which is really free of any body, thinks that It has a body and this very thought itself is Its body. When the Atman is with a body in this way, It is called the jiva which is under the strong hold of likes and dislikes, and hence, there seems to be no break in the experience of pain and pleasure due to contact of external objects. When however he is freed from this delusion through right knowledge and becomes freed from identification with the body, pleasure and pain cease to affect him in any manner. Here, by denying pleasure, the bliss of the Atman is not denied. What is denied is the sense pleasure which seems to rise from the contact of the senses with their objects, which to a discriminating man is nothing different from pain, for all sense pleasures are the seeds of pain and misery which follow on their heels. O Indra, you are really bodiless even as the space is bodiless. All the worlds and all the desires are not different from you and through this knowledge you attain them all. You were so far under the mistaken notion that these worlds, desires and pleasures were different from you and that you were their controller and lord. That is not the fact. Really you are one with all."

The bodiless Atman due to avidya completely identifies itself with the body and says 'I am this body'. How this Atman, as though, rising out of this body, freeing itself from the body through knowledge born out of meditation, attains its own real nature, is shown through a few analogies. Air (wind) is bodiless, as it has no body with head, hands and other limbs. Not only air but also cloud, lightning and thunder also have no body. When their functions such as rain, etc., are over, they become one with the akasa, space. They leave off their original, natural forms and be- come one with aksasa. akasa, is limited, being the effect of Brahman. While thus remaining identified with akasa, in order to become useful they rise up therefrom and once again assume their original forms. How? When the winter is over, getting the intense brilliance of the sun, they separate themselves, and each one of them

(the air, cloud, thunder and lightning) assumes its natural, original form of air, cloud, lightning and thunder. The air abandoning its unmoving nature becomes the eastern wind, western wind, storm, cyclone etc. The cloud forsaking its bodiless, form- less nature, appears in the form of continents, mountains, elephants, etc. The lightning also which was one with the space, now appears in its natural form of momentary, effulgent creeper and the like. The thunder too which was one with the space assumes its form of roaring sound and thunderbolt. Even as in these illustrations, the air, cloud and the like become one with the space, the Atman in the state of ignorance, due to a false delusion becomes one with the bodies, assumes the state of transmigration and says 'I am so and so, the son of so and so', 'I am born', 'I am becoming old and I will die soon'. Such a jiva which is the Atman identified with the body, when awakened through meditation on the instructions of the teacher 'you are not a jiva, you have no body, mind and their properties, you are Brahman', rises up from this body, even as air and the rest in the illustrations rise up from space, realises its original, pristine, pure nature different from the body, mind, etc., i.e., renouncing the feeling of 'I am the body', becomes one with its own nature which is sat-chit-ananda, otherwise known as uttama-purusha, the Supreme Person, the Person that is the Supreme.

Four purushas, 'persons' have been discussed here: (i) the Person in the eye, (ii) the Person in dream (these two are in manifested forms), (iii) The Person in deep sleep (this is unmanifested, universal and serene), and (iv) the Person who is bodiless and is in his own nature. Among these four, the last one, compared to the manifested and un-manifested, the perishable and the imperishable, is said to be superior, and therefore, given the name uttama-purusha, the Supreme Person. Lord Krishna also gives the same name to Himself when He says: "Because I transcend the perish-able (the manifested) and am even higher than the imperish- able (the unmanifested), I am known in the world and in the Veda as purushottama, the Supreme

Person" (Bh. Gita. XV- 18). The meaning of this verse of the Gita like many other verses thereof, is difficult to understand. It is not capable of being grasped by the individual mind of man. An ancient verse says: "Lord Krishna alone knows the real import of the Gita, Sage Vyasa who wrote it also might be knowing it. And sage Suka, the son of Vyasa might also be knowing. Arjuna who heard it from the Lord knew a portion and not in its entirety. And others merely hear of it and appear to understand it". The intention of the author of this verse is not to discourage the aspirants, but only to point out that they must go beyond the grammatical meaning of the verses, beyond the idea or concept behind the words and sentences and become merged in the Consciousness, termed uttama-purusha in this vidya, who will never become an 'object' of knowledge.

The ultimate Reality which is said to be unqualifled, unrelated, impersonal, non-dual, is not a negation or exclusion of the manifested reality. This is made clear in Brahma Sutras IV-4-iv to vii. After giving the seemingly contradict- ing views of sages Jaimini and Audulomi, sage Badarayana says that there is no contradiction in their views about the nature of the Supreme, because even though it is admitted that Brahman manifests Itself as pure Consciousness, still Its possession of divine majesty of omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and the rest, is not denied from the empirical point of view. The meditator realises this great Truth, as a result of this meditation.

He no more feels any difference of any kind, at any time, anywhere. He may pray or may not pray. When he prays, he may pray: "aham tvam tvam-aham sarvam jagadetat chara-charam, namastubhyam namo mahyam tubh- yam mahyam namo-namah-I am Thou, Thou art I as also all this universe of mobile and immobile beings; prostrations to Thee, prostrations to Me, prostrations again and again to Thee and to Me."

"tubhyam mahyam-anantaya mahyam tubhyam chidat- mane; namastubhyam paresaya namo mahyam sivaya cha- Prostrations again and again to Thee and to Me, to the end- less, to Me and to Thee the Consciousness-Self, to Thee the Lord transcendental and to Me, the all-auspicious."

SECTION X

BRIHADARANYAKA-UPANISHAD

63. ASVAMEDHA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE HORSE SACRIFICE)

The first two sections of the first chapter of the Brihad- aranyaka-upanishad deal with the meditation on the Horse Sacrifice. The usual ritualistic Horse Sacrifice occuring in the karma-kanda portions of the Vedas is prescribed only for emperors belonging to the kshatriya class. The result is the attainment of sovereignity over the earth while living and heavenly worlds after death, according to whether the sacrifice is performed as a mere ritual or combined with meditation. But here the Upanishad instructs pure meditation rid of the ritualistic part of the sacrifice. It is a meditation on hiranyagarbha, the great vaisvanara who pervades the whole universe in the causal, subtle and gross forms. The sacrificial horse is a symbol for hiranyagarbha, the cosmic purusha. The aspirant should meditate on himself as the sacrificial horse which is also the cosmic person. His head is to be meditated as the early dawn which forms the head of the cosmic hiranyagarbha. His eye is to be meditated as the sun, the eye of the cosmic purusha. Similar- ly, the breath is to be meditated as the wind or the atmospheric air, the open mouth as the vaisvanara-agni and the body as the year. The back, belly, hoof, side ribs, limbs, joints, feet, bones, flesh, the half-digested food in the belly, the blood-vessels, liver and spleen, hairs, fore part, the hind part, the yawning, shaking the body, making water and the neighing are to be meditated upon respectively as heaven, sky, earth, four quarters, intermediate regions, seasons, months and fortnights, days and nights, stars, clouds, sand, rivers, mountains, herbs and trees, the ascending sun, the descending sun, lightning, thundering, raining and sound. Again, the vessel used in the ritualistic sacrifice called mahiman placed in front of the sacrificial horse, is to be meditated as the day and its source as the eastern sea; the other silver vessel placed behind the horse, as the night and its source as the western sea. The Upanshad here gives four different species of horses- haya, vaji, arva and asva. These four should be meditated as carrying

the gods, celestials, demons and men respectively. Lastly, the stable where this sacrificial horse is tied, is to be medi- tated as the supreme Self to whom is tied hiranyagarbha as it were.

Next in importance to the sacrificial horse is the sacrificial fire in which the horse is to be offered as the most holy oblation. This fire is referred to as arka. The Upanishad states how the virat, the gross cosmic manifestation came out of hiranyagarbha, the corresponding subtle aspect and the former further differentiated himself in three ways as the sun, the air, and the fire. Meditation on this virat is now prescribed. His head, the two arms, hind part, two thighs, the two sides, back, belly and breast are to be meditated as east, north-east and south-east, west, north-west and south-west, south and north, heaven, sky and earth, respectively. The virat or hiranyagarbha is further to be meditated as resting on the Cosmic Waters, the unmanifested isvara.

The horse sacrifice here is symbolic. It is the symbol of unification of the apparent manifoldness of the universe. It involves the effacement of one's individuality in the form of 'I' and 'mine' through meditation on the cosmic form of virat and hiranyagarbha, the manifestation of the Absolute. This universe of multiplicity is the vast sacrifice of God. Through this sacrifice the Absolute itself has become this universe, as it were. Duality is not real in that it is not the Absolute. But being the manifestation of the Absolute it (duality) has a degree of reality. Duality may be said to be the expression of the Reality or Non-duality. It is the sphurti or the samvit in the phraseology of the 'manisha panchakam' of Sri Acharya Sankara. 'I am' is the highest description of the Reality, but the Upanishads go still further and say that the Absolute transcends this also. brahman transcends isvara, hiranyagarbha and virat, His own expressions or manifestations.

The ritualistic asvamedha sacrifice of the Brahmana portion of the Vedas becomes pure contemplation in the Upanishadic vidya. It is a process of contemplation rather than any action involving movement

of the limbs. Even the mental process of the individual mind with which the meditation starts, culminates in the Being of the Universal purusha. The gods performed this great sacrifice thro- ugh sacrifice, yajnena yajnam-ayajanta devah says the famous purusha-sukta. In the last stage of this meditation, the triad of the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation is eliminated, because as the gita says Brahman is the act of offering in this yajna, He alone is the oblation, He alone is the sacrificial fire, the Ultimate Goal reached by the meditator who sees Him in all actions (IV-24). All sacrifices symbolise self-sacrifice, which starts with the sacrifice of what one has viz., the various objects and finally with one's ego. The sruti says: "One who sacrifices to the Self is better than one who sacrifices to the gods". There- fore, in this asvamedha-vidya wherein both the sacrificial horse and the sacrificial fire are identified with the universal Person through meditation, the consciousness first gives up externality and becomes internal and finally assumes its original universal aspect and then the transcendental aspect. The universe has empirical and illusory reality which may be said to be two lower aspects of the one and non-dual Reality, the Absolute. Therefore, the Upanishad speaks of the Absolute as satyasya-satyam, the Truth of truth. This world is truth, being a manifestation of Truth-Absolute and the Absolute is the higher Truth, the ultimate Truth wherein the subject coalesces with the object along with the relation between the subject and the object and that between one object and another object.

Through this meditation, this feeling of differentiation, that I am separate from the manifold world with every object distinct from every other, is sublated. When one understands the simple truth that the space which is supposed to cause separation of one object from another object, is itself an object and therefore connects the two objects, the notion of physical separation vanishes. Going a step fur- ther, the intellect can cognise the organic wholeness of this universe when one comes to know that prana is a universal force which

pervades and permeates all the objects of the universe, both sentient and insentient, like the warp and woof in a piece of cloth. Therefore, we conclude that it is the mind that creates all manifoldness where there is really no manifoldness. The mind and manifoldness themselves become included in the Absolute. All differentiation is thus psychological, resulting from nescience, an inscrut- able cause which has no beginning but which ends with meditation as prescribed by the scriptures. The most awe- inspiring, breath-stopping conclusion of the scriptures is that there is no ignorance, no maya and what is perceived by the senses and the mind including themselves is the pure, ever-peaceful Brahman alone.

The absence of sensory perception is termed as Death. In that condition which existed before the creation of the manifested universe, the 'seer' was not distinct from the 'seen'. As there was no particular consciousness such as T', 'you', 'this', 'that', etc., that condition is described as Death. The word 'hunger' in this section of the Upanishad does not mean the biological urge to take food, but is a metaphysical principle which attracts everything towards the 'Centre', the centripetal force which manifests as gravitation, attraction, repulsion, etc.

Creation of the universe is quite unlike the manufacture of a new article. It is like the creation of a circle of fire when a fire brand rotates sufficiently fast. It is best compared to the creation of the dream world or of a snake in the rope. At the time of experiencing the dream world or seeing a rope-snake, there is a degree of reality in the objects seen. They cannot be said to be completely non- existent, because they are seen. The cause from which the world has come out cannot be a non-entity, as 'nothing' cannot produce something. Both the cause and the effect as well as the process of creation are inscrutable and beyond all human logic. The cause contains the effect in the pri-mordial or unmanifested state. Though there is no real difference between cause and effect, still there is difference in the empirical realm. The principle

of externality, the space-time continuum is latent in the ultimate Cause and it is called the maya-sakti or the devatma sakti, the inscrut- able power of the Supreme which cannot be fully explained and hence called the anirvachaniya, the indescribable. The moment creational process sets in through this great Power which is as mysterious as the Supreme itself, there is a great catastrophic change which is equally inexplicable. This is the urge for diversity that is referred to as the principle of Death in this context in the Upanishad, for it is the destroyer of the original state of oneness or non-duality. Viewing it from this end also, it is Death, for the whole phenomenal universe merges into it. The restlessness that we find in the universe is a result of these two opposite forces, one tending to multiplicity and the other to unity. Both these urges are working simultaneously in man.

The individual, the universal and the Absolute are not different from one another, but are the three aspects of the non-dual Brahman. Though the Absolute is transcendent, It cannot be found outside the universe. And Absolute is not the mere sum total of the individual and the universal. We may not be far from the right if we say that the consciousness of the universal or the individual is death of the Absolute, as it were. And similarly, the Absolute is as it were the death of both the individual and the universal. The consciousness of the universal is quite different from the consciousness of the individual. Nobody can 'understand' the Absolute in the usual sense of the term, because the Absolute is beyond quantity and quality and all such relations and attributes. The Absolute is not an object, nor the subject. It is not a concept. The three dimensional universe cannot be correlated with the Absolute, and there- fore, some extraordinary phenomenon is posited to account for this creation. As the Svetasvatara-upanishad has stated in the opening mantras, all speculative causes such as time, nature, law, chance, matter, energy, intelligence and the individual self either independently or in combination with one or more among themselves, cannot

satisfactorily explain the why, how, when of creation. The philosophical theories such as idealism, realism, nihilism, monism, dual- ism, qualified monism, etc., do try to explain to some extent the mysterious process of creation, but none can give a complete and satisfactory explanation which can be had only through meditation and the knowledge super- sensuous and super-intellectual that dawns in the aspirant when the universal subject 'I' visualises, as it were, the universal object. The Cosmic Subject or Consciousness as though becomes 'conscious' of the cosmic object which is nothing but Consciousness.

This meditation on the Horse sacrifice is a combined meditation on the sacrificial horse and the sacrificial fire as hiranyagarbha. This meditation is very holy and sanctify- ing. Through this meditation, the meditator leaves off individuality and moves towards the universal. Through this knowledge he overcomes the urge for multiplicity called death, because he becomes the very Self of that death. He becomes one with the creator, the created and the very pro- cess of creative activity, the virat and hiranyagarbha.

This is illustrated in the life of the Tamil Saivite Saint by name Pusalar.

The story couched in devotional language is as follows:-Among the sixty three Nayanars, great devotees of Lord Siva, the God of destruction, whose lives are very popular in South India, there was one named Pusalar. After practising external worship of the Lord in Siva Lingas, images etc., he started mental worship which is more difficult for people of extrovert mind but far superior to worship on symbols outside. He attained Samadhi, the superconscious state. He had a desire to build a big temple for the Lord. Being very poor, he started the construction in his mind with mental materials as against physical ones. He laid the foundation stone on an auspicious day and raised the temple, a stupendous structure, all in his mind. The king of the country who was also a devotee of Lord Siva was then constructing a magnificent temple spending a fabu- lous amount. It so happened that

the auspicious time and day fixed for the installation of the deity by the king were the same as fixed by the poor devotee Pusalar. The Lord who wanted to show the king and others the superiority of Pusalar's great devotion, appeared in the king's dream and asked him to postpone the installation in his temple to another date, as He would be going to the temple of Pusalar. The king woke up next morning and was anxious to see the temple of Pusalar and also have the darsan of the great devotee whose devotion has been accepted by the Lord Himself as superior to his own devotion. The king searched for the temple but could not find and at last went to the hut where Pusalar was living. The latter was greatly surprised to hear of king's dream. He was almost stunned and recovering he was overjoyed. He told the king how he had constructed the temple in his mind and how he was worshipping the Lord mentally. The king fell at the feet of the poor devotee and worshipped him. This reveals the superiority of meditation over ritualistic worship and sacri- fices.

Such a devotee or meditator is himself the virat and hiranyagarbha. He is not the individual body which alone is seen through the senses by others who have not raised their consciousness to the virat Consciousness. As long as we are identifying ourselves with the individual body thinking that alone is the 'T' and the whole world is different and separate and is an aggregate of objects, we cannot experience the virat Consciousness. In our limited vision thro- ugh the senses and the mind, he who is one with virat will also be seen as one among the several individual body-mind composites and we in our ignorance attribute to him the existence of duality, the pairs of opposites like pain and pleasure, like and dislike, friendship and enmity, etc. He may appear to us like any one amongst us enjoying happiness and suffering pain. This happens because we are see-ing him through our senses as a body-mind complex. The reports of the senses are always wrong which fact has the concurrence of even our modern scientists. And these wrong reports are okayed by the mind

which acts according to those reports. So whatever we see in the Sage is a projection of our mind. They cannot be in him who is one with the Cosmic mind and Cosmic body in which there is not the least division, in which duality, triad and such other concepts have coalesced into a mass of Consciousness as it were. As spiritual seekers we should be very careful before making a judgment about any person or anything or any incident in this world, much more so in the case of a Sage who through meditation has identified himself with "the all". Any judgment passed by our mind about any- thing cannot but be wrong, as all judgments are in the realm of duality where there are the concepts of pairs of opposites like right and wrong, good and bad etc. And the Sage is in the realm of non-dual consciousness.

64. UDGITHA-VIDYA-7

(MEDITATION ON THE UDGITHA-7)

In their commentaries on Brahma Sutras III-3-vi to viii, it has been declared both by Acharya Sankara and Sri Gurudev Swami Sivananda, that the udgitha-vidyas in the Chhandogya-upanishad and Brihadaranyaka-upanishad are to be treated as different vidyas in spite of the fact that all of them are named udgitha-vidya and some of them occur in the same Upanishad, viz, the Chhandogya

The syllable om is identified with udgitha. As already stated in connection with these vidyas in the Chhandogya- upanishad, sama-veda consists of five bhaktis and one of them is named udgitha, the other four being himkara, pras- tava, pratihara and nidhana. In the seven divisions of the sama veda as himkara, prastava, adi, udgitha, pratihara, upadrava and nidhana the fourth is named udgitha. udgitha is sung by the priest who is named udgatr. prana is also said to be udgitha.

Section 3 of the first chapter of the Brihadaranyaka- upanishad is devoted to udgitha which is the source of rites and meditation. The result of meditation on the udgitha is identity with fire and sun. Transcendence of death refer- red to in mantras I-3-xii to xvi in this context, means transcending the natural attachment to evil and not transcendence of hiranyagarbha. The vidya is explained through the allegory of the gods and demons vying with each other, an allegory which has already appeared in another vidya (udgitha-vidya-2).

The celestials and demons both being the sons of prajapati are brothers among themselves. They represent the divine and demoniac natures, the positive and negative forces in the world. It is said that the celestials are few and the demons are more in number, which represents the present condition of world, where those of demoniac nature are more in number than those of divine nature. The war between the two is always going on in the individual and in its

universal counterpart, the war between the integrating and disintegrating forces. The celestials who are the pre- siding deities of our organs, with their counterparts in the universe, took the help of the udgitha-mantra of the sama-veda to win a victory over the demons. The deity of the organ of speech first chanted the udgitha. But the demon in the form of evil of attachment attacked the deity and as a result, the organ of speech started wrong and erroneous chanting. It lost all power, and the victory went to the demons. When the deity of the organ of speech was defeated, the gods asked the other deities. presiding over the organs of ear, nose, eye, mind and the rest to use the weapon of udgitha to destroy the demons. All of them were hit by the demons with the evil of attach- ment to sense- objects in the twin forms of raga and dvesha, like and dislike, the feeling of individuality and all the rest of the disintegrating forces. The Upanishad says that this happened to the gods who are the limbs of the cosmic Person and as a result, we, His progeny also are subjected to the evil of sensing good and bad through all the organs and the mind. Now, the gods approached prana, the unifying force among the organs, but for which the organs become dead, as it were. The demons as before, tried to hit it, but could not succeed, because it is impersonal with- out the raga-dvesha and similar separative tendencies. Like a clod of dry clay striking at a hard rock getting itself shattered to pieces, the demons hitting against prana them- selves were smashed, and the gods won the victory.

The significance of this allegorical story is that selfish desire to enjoy pleasure and to avoid pain is the cause for the success of the negative forces. In a broad sense, it is objectification and separation of objects from one's Self that is the cause of samsara. One should get over this evil by meditating on the udgitha-prana. This will effect sense-control. Again using the Upanishadic language, the undivided speech should become one with its presiding deity of agni, the individual eye should identify itself with its deity and cosmic counterpart which is the sun,

and so on. This is to be effected through meditation. The prana here in this meditation, is the vital force residing in the mouth with fire as its presiding deity which is a limb of the cosmic prana. The Upanishad calls it by the name of anasya-angirasa, signifying the fact that it pervades the whole body as the essence of all the parts or limbs.

Another name given in the Upanishad is dur, a sym- bolical name which brings home to the meditator the truth that prana is far away from death. Death here is nothing but the desire of the senses and the mind to go out seeking their objects. Continuing the story, it is said that the senses and the mind, the demoniac forces were driven out of the kingdom of Truth. No one should hazard to go there, where these demons are. Assertion of the senses over prana is something like a tenant assuming ownership of the property and driving out the legitimate owner.

As a result of this meditation, the organ of speech assumes its original cosmic form of fire, a limb of the Cosmic Person. Similarly, all the other ograns also re- sume their Cosmic form. Now, whatever is done in the body is done by prana whether it is seeing through the eye or hearing through the ear or digesting food or evacuating the refuse. When prana is satisfied, every limb in the body is satisfied. This is udgitha, because prana is ut and speech is githa. It is the sama, because sa is speech and ma, vital force.

In this section of the Upanishad appears the oft- chanted prayer: "asato-ma satgamaya, tamaso-ma jyotir- gamaya, mrityor-ma amritam gamaya-from the unreal lead me to the Real, from darkness lead me to Light and from death lead me to Immortality". This world separated from God, is unreal and dark and it is termed death. The prayer is to take the meditator to the world beyond, which is qualified by the terms 'real', 'light', and 'immortality'. The Being in every one of us, for that matter in each and every so- called object, is this only Reality, and all the rest which are names and forms are transient, unreal and really non- existent.

The gist of this vidya is summarised by the great Acharya Sankara at the close of his commentary on this section by saying how one should meditate. He says that the aspirant should meditate thus: "I am the pure prana, not to be touched by the evil characteristics of the demons in the form of attachment of the senses to their respective objects. The five organs have, by resting on me, been freed from the defects of these evils which spring from one's natural thoughts and have become the cosmic deities of fire, the sun and so forth, and they are connected with all bodies by partaking of the food that belongs to me. Being angirasa, I am the Self of all beings. And I am the Self of speech manifesting itself as rik, yajus and sama and udgitha, for I pervade it and produce it. I am transformed into sama chant. I have the external wealth of good voice. I also have a more intimate treasure consist- ing of fine articulation according to phonetics. And when I become the chant, the throat and other parts of the body are my support. With these attributes, I am completely present in all bodies beginning with that of a white-ant, because I am formless and all- pervading".

The result of this meditation is restraint of senses, attainment of wealth of sama, i.e., sweet voice and correct articulation. The meditator transcends death in the form of attachment to objects. He wins the world of hiranya- garbha.

65. 'AHAM BRAHMASMI' MAHAVAKYA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE GREAT SENTENCE I AM BRAHMAN')

This vidya appears in section 4 of the first chapter of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad. mantra ix therein says: "Men think through the knowledge of Brahman, we shall become all'. Well, what did that Brahman know by which It became all?" mantra x replies: "This Self was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only Itself as 'I am Brahman'. Therefore, It became all." This great sentence 'I am Brahman' is said to be anusandhana-vakya, the sentence for repeated meditation.

The meditation on 'aham brahmasmi-I am Brahman' is similar to the meditation on the maha-vakya, tat-tvam-asi- That Thou Art, occuring in the Chhandogya-upanishad. The Self that is perceived in the body is certainly Brahman But owing to always, even before one realises the fact. an unreal nescience, as unreal as a snake seen on a rope, an equally unreal superimposition is made. By whom is this made? It is made by Brahman itself, because there was none else before this superimposition. On what is the super- imposition made? On Brahman Itself. And what is it that is superimposed on Brahman by Brahman? What else can It superimpose except Itself, because there is nothing else other to It. Then is the universe that is seen, Brahman Itself? Yes, that is what the scriptures tom-tom at the top of their voice.

But, we see a heterogeneous perishable world in space and time with pain and suffering, instead of the homogeneous, non-dual, immortal, blissful Brahman? It is a great mystery how the non-dual Brahman, owing to an unreal ignorance, superimposes on Itself as it were the idea that It is naught. It does not stop with that. It further thinks that It is the doer and the enjoyer, that It does actions and enjoys the fruits of actions, pleasurable and painful, and that It is a helpless, petty, limited, trans- migrating, individual person. All this is a dream in sleep.

Being somehow awakened from this sleep and dream, It knows only Itself, freed of all ignorance and superimposi- tion. It knows: "I am Brahman, the Atman, the Seer of sight, the Hearer of sound, Brahman which is immediate and direct, which pervades through and through every cell of every being, that which is described as 'not this, not this'." Through this knowledge, the notion that It is an individual person is removed. Therefore, it becomes the all.

Raising the prima facie view that ignorance and the resulting superimposition are out of place in the non-dual Infinite which Brahman is, the great commentator, Sankara- charya, in this context, says that they are not out of place as long as we are what we are at present. Citing the analogy of silver and nacre, he explains that when there is no superimposition of silver on nacre and when the nacre is seen as nacre, no one takes the trouble of saying that it is a nacre and not silver. The scriptures do not take the trouble of positing ignorance and superimposition on those who have known the Truth. Nor do these scriptures make their declarations such as 'All this is Brahman', 'All this is the Atman', 'I am Brahman', 'You are That', etc., to those rare souls who have realised the unreality of the ignorance and the superimposition. To such persons all this duality and multiplicity have no existence apart from Brahman.

One day a monk was sitting with eyes closed, on the bank of the Ganges and was chanting the mantra, aham brahmasmi. A sage who had realised the Truth but was earn- ing his livelihood by driving a tonga (a light two-wheeled vehicle) happened to go near him. He heard the monk chanting the mantra. In order to instruct him on the highest Truth, this tongawala-sage sat near him and started repeating loudly, 'I am a tongawala', 'I am a tongawala'. (tongawala means driver of a tonga) This loud voice of his disturbed the monk's meditation and he opened his eyes to know the cause of the disturbance. He saw an ill clad chap sitting near him and making the sound. The monk enquired of him: 'Who are you?' He said: 'I am a tonga-wala', "Then

why do you go on repeating 'I am a tonga- wala?'-asked the monk. He calmly rejoined: "O monk, why do you repeat 'I am Brahman'? Are you not already Brahman?" This reply of the tongawala-sage immediately caused the flash of illumination in the monk.

The scriptures are intended for the qualified disciples who feel that they are in ignorance and that they want liberation at any cost. It cannot be said that the ignorance and the superimposition posited on the non-dual, infinite Absolute and then removed through a process of desuper- imposition and through the saving knowledge 'I am Brah-man', are out of place. On the other hand, they are the only methods by which the ever-attained is attained as it were. The ultimate truth, therefore, is that even when man erroneously imagines himself to be the ignorant jiva. he is really the Infinite Brahman.

In the mantra 'I am Brahman', the two terms 'T' and 'Brahman' do not connote two different entities which re- quire to be identified or equated with each other. There are no two, only the non-dual Absolute is. In the oft- quoted analogy of the erroneous vision of a ghost on a distant post on a moon-lit night, when the truth of the post is subsequently known, one says: 'the ghost is a post'. This can never mean that there are two things, a ghost and a post and that they are identical. That would be absurd. Though the word meaning or the grammatical meaning of the sentence may allow such an interpretation, no sensible man would accept it, because of the impossibility involved in identifying a real ghost with a real post. Therefore, what is done in this analogy is to accept the meaning implied by the words. This implied meaning is that what was seen as a ghost through mistake, is not a ghost, but is really a post. Similarly, in the sentence 'I am Brahman', the 'T' which generally refers to the ego, has to be sublated as is done with the 'ghost' in the analogy. When the 'T' thus disappears, the non-dual Brahman alone is left. Meditation on aham brahmasmi must be preceded by the neti, neti method of reflection. Through this reflec-tion the whole world

including one's own body, the subtle senses, the mind, the intellect and the ego which are mis- taken for the Self, is eliminated as not the real 'I'.

Acharya Sankara in one of his short compositions called nirvana-shatkam-a hexad on Liberation-gives the method of meditation on 'I am Siva-sivoham'. The first verse says: The 'I' is not the mind, intellect, the ego, the subconscious, nor is the 'T' the senses of hearing, tasting, smelling, seeing or touching, nor is the 'T' the five elements, ether, air, fire, water or earth; but the 'I' is the all-auspicious siva of the form of Consciousness-Bliss. The next verse details how meditation should proceed by the negation of the five pranas, the five upa-pranas, the seven dhatus, the five kosas, the five motor-organs and the affirmation of the Reality, the auspicious siva of the nature of Consciousness-Bliss. Through the third verse, the Acharya instructs the negation of likes and dislikes, greed and delusion, passion and jealousy, the four purusharthas [the four purusharthas (aims of human life) are: dharma (cosmic law), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation)] including liberation, for liberation is the counterpart of bondage both of which have to be transcend- ed to attain the most auspicious siva, the supreme Brah- man. The fourth and the fifth verses instruct meditation through the negation of merit and demerit, happi- ness and misery, sacred formulae and holy waters, the deities and sacrifices, enjoyer, enjoyment and the enjoyable, the fear of death, distinctions in social status, father, mother, one's own birth, relations and friends, preceptor and disciple. The last verse says that the negation of all these should be followed by the affirmation of the truth, 'I am without thoughts, formless, the all- pervasive Lord, with organs everywhere, always in a state of equipoise of the three gunas wherein there is neither bondage nor liberation, which is pure Consciousness-bliss- absolute, the Great siva, Brahman'.

The meditation mentioned above effects the realisation of the Supreme by which one becomes the 'all'. The mantra in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad says that whoever among the gods knew this great Truth became Brahman. It is so with sages and men. Sage Vamadeva even while in his mother's womb realised this Brahman and declared: "I was Manu and the Sun". The Upanishad assures us that to this day whoever in like manner meditates and knows I am Brahman', becomes all this. His separate individuality disappears and he becomes the Infinite Itself. The drop as it were becomes the ocean. The drop remain- ing in the ocean was already the ocean, but somehow it thought that it was a small drop separate from the vast This is couched ocean. That wrong notion is removed. in the statement that the drop becomes the ocean. Not even gods can prevent such a knower from becoming the all, for he is their own Self. The Upanishad strongly deprecates other forms of meditation wherein are involved ideas that the meditator is different from the deity meditated upon, that the deity will be pleased by the worship and meditation and will bestow all prosperity. In such cases, the deities do not like their worshippers knowing the supreme Truth and becoming the all, lest they lose their worshippers and thus deprive themselves of their services. This is said in praise of the highest form of meditation on aham brahmasmi and not to decry those other meditations which are all right as far as they go and and are productive of much good to the meditator.

In the third chapter of the Tejobindu-upanishad, the glory of this mantra, aham brahmasmi is described. It is in reply to the question of Kumara (Kartikeya) to Lord Siva. The question is: 'O revered Father, kindly describe to me the direct experience of the Atman'. In reply Lord Siva says: "I am of the form of the transcendental Brahman and transcendental Bliss, pure Consciousness, the Alone, the Supreme Transcendence. I am the direct Experience, 'I am the All', and yet the all if separated from the Atman, is asat unreal and non-existent. The

mantra, aham brahmasmi transcends all other mantras which are seven crores in number and which are only productive of many crores of rebirth. Therefore, one should leave off all other mantras and should practise the meditation on aham brahmasmi alone. It bestows immediate liberation and there is not even the least doubt about this. The meditation on this mantra results in the destruction of all sins of this birth and also of previous births and all defects of the body. It breaks the cord of death, destroys the mental modifi- cation of differences, annihilates the bondage caused by the vasanas and samskaras, does away with all diseases including the disease of birth and death, causes the ces- sation of all sorrow, anger and similar mental modifica- tions, and results in the transcendence of indirect knowledge of the Atman and attainment of the atma-loka and eternal bliss after removing all insentience in the form of tamas. It causes the disappearance of all the anatman, everything other to the Atman, and bestows sat-chit-ananda and sadyomukti, immediate liberation. The same Upanishad in its fourth chapter gives a hint as to the transcendental nature of Liberation. It says that It is beyond all experiences, beyond all meditation and It is far away from the meaning of the mahavakyas and far far away from the con- cept of 'I am Brahman'.

This vidya practised by a qualified aspirant, yields this ultimate Liberation. There is no doubt about it.

In the state of ignorance, every one knowingly or un- knowingly, consciously or unconsciously thinks that I am something. This thought may express in any form such as 'I am a big officer', or 'I am the head of the family" or 'I am an important person in the village' and so on. To counteract this kind of thought, the spiritual aspirants, as a part of their sadhana try to avoid this 'I am something' by replacing it with the concept 'I am nothing' as those who practise bhakti-yoga, or 'I am everything' as those who practise jnana-yoga. Both these concepts are good as far as they go. But, both of them also have to be transcended.

The Atman-Brahman, the Absolute is no 'thing', It being the infinite and transcendental. Therefore, the some-'thing', the no-'thing' and the every-'thing'-all the three 'thing'-s- have to be transcended through this meditation on 'I Am Brahman'.

66. PANKTA-VIDYA-2

(Meditation on five- membered groups-2)

Another meditation of a similar nature as the just preceding one, is given in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad mantra 17 of section 4 of chapter I. The mantra starts with the statement: "atmaiva-idam-agra asit eka-eva-this was but the self in the beginning". Here, the word 'self' means an ordinary man ignorant of the Truth, identified with the body and organs, the aspirant, a neophyte in the spiritual path. There was nothing different from him, such as a wife, son, wealth, etc. He was alone with the igno- rance, the root of all desires. Then he desired for a wife, then for a son, then for wealth and then for performance of sacrifices for the attainment of higher worlds after death. All his desires can be brought under three main categories, viz., desire for progeny, desire for wealth and desire for renown or the higher worlds. These desires arise within the mind under an impulse or urge which is very difficult to understand, because we are one with them. The scriptures tell us that the desires arise due to the urge of the Cosmic Being who is all-pervasive. The desires may start from the lowest level, the so-called silly, mean and sinful and rise up to the highest, the desire for God, for Liberation. The desires in the lower levels have to be purified gradually and finally sublimated through vidya, meditation prescribed in the scriptures. Through knowledge provided to us in the scriptures, these impulses can be converted into spiritual energy.

This vidya attempts to bring all objects of desire considered as external to and different from oneself, within the realm of one's own self. The world is in 'me', and not I in the world. Just as the whole of the dream world was within 'me', the waking world also with all its umpteen objects of desire, is really within 'me'. This is what the scriptures say. This knowledge is effected through this meditation. As long as one has any of these desires, he feels himself incomplete and tries to get the object of desire and thus fulfil himself and become complete.

The vidya prescribes the meditation of one's mind as the source of all desires, as the chief organ or his self. Speech always follows the mind, as a wife follows her husband; hence, it is his wife or is like a wife to the mind. prana, the vital force is the impulse for action and is like a child for the couple. Sacrifices and rites are done with the help of eyes and ears. They are, therefore, the wealth for the performance of the sacrifices. These five faculties, viz., mind, speech, vital force, eyes and ears are the avenue for all sacrifices and ritualistic actions as well as secular acti- vities. They should not be considered as different, indepen- dent entities, but should be integrated through meditation. In the absence of the spiritual principle, the Consciousness, neither the religious nor the secular activities can be done. Consciousness is the connecting link between the subject and object.

A sacrifice has five factors, viz., the sacrificer, his wife, his son, divine wealth (contemplation) and human wealth (materials used). The meditator has five factors-mind, speech, vital force, ears and eyes. All men have these five factors. The animals also have these five factors. And all that exists has the five factors. Therefore, they are all one. Thus should one meditate on the unity of the whole universe.

What is the result of this meditation? The Upanishad says that the meditator gets his desires fulfilled, because he becomes one with the object of desire. There is, there- fore, no more desiring for anything, as nothing remains outside him, separate from him.

67. TRYANNA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THREE KINDS OF FOOD)

This vidya occurs in the fifth brahmana, the saptanna- brahmana in the first chapter of the Brihadaranyaka-upani- shad. 'anna' is generally understood as food. Here, in this section, it has got a much wider and comprehensive meaning. The objects of desire enjoyed or experienced by all the senses form the food of the senses which are the manifestations of prana. The eater of the food is prana in all the cases. Therefore, the whole world is the food of prana which is none other than Consciousness. In other words, all matter is here referred to as the food of Consciousness. Using the samkhyan terms we may say that prakriti is the food of purusha. All objects are the food for the Subject, because the former are, as it were, grasped and swallowed like food by the latter.

Speech (vak), mind (manas), the vital-force (prana), are the three kinds of food taken up for meditation. Through this meditation, one has to set all speech that is spoken through the organ of speech, all thoughts thought of by the mind and all actions done through the vital-force, in tune with the gross physical world, the subtle astral world and the divine celestial world, or in another sense with the individual, universal and divine aspects of the world.

The physical world is constituted of the objects of senses and the speech expresses them through words. Hence, the physical world and the speech are to be meditated as identical. The mind is subtler and more expansive than the body. And the intermediate astral world is also more subtle and more pervasive than the gross physical world. This is the similarity between mind and the subtle world to help meditation on their identity. Similarly, prana and the celestial heaven are to be meditated as identical on their similarity which is that prana is superior to the body, organs and the mind, and the heaven is superior to this terrestrial world and the intermediate region. Another

similarity is that even as prana is very difficult of perception by the senses and the mind, the heavenly world also is difficult of being seen by the senses or even thought of by the mind. Through this meditation, one becomes identical with the outer world. Such a meditator starts feeling that 'I am this world' and 'the world is I'.

The next part of the meditation is on the three kinds of food-speech, mind and prana-as identical with the three Vedas-the rigveda, yajurveda and the samaveda res- pectviely. The rigveda is the source of all the hymns in praise of gods and speech is the expression of these hymns. This is their similarity. Again, the relation between speech and mind is similar to that between rigveda and yajurveda. samaveda is more difficult to chant and understand than the other two, even as prana is more difficult to understand and control than the speech and mind. Based on these similarities, the aspirant should meditate on their identity, and the result of this meditation is that he becomes possessed of all knowledge, as the Vedas are the repository of all knowledge.

The third part of this meditation prescribed is on the identity of speech, mind and prana with the denizens of the three worlds-the gods in the heavens, the manes in the intermediate world and the men in this world. This meditation reconciles all irreconcilables, because the meditator is freed from all separation from the three worlds and their denizens and the consequent tensions which are psycho- logical.

In the fourth part of the meditation, the Upanishad prescribes contemplation on the identity of speech, mind and prana with father, mother and children. Through this meditation, they all become one with the meditator and there will be no more any strain or friction between him and the members of his family. The meditator will be able to lead his life in the family with peace and harmony.

In the fifth part is given the meditation on the identity of speech, mind and prana, with all that is already known, all that is yet to be known

and all that is unknown, respec- tively. Speech can express only that which has been known and understood. Hence, speech and all that is known should be meditated as non-different. When, through meditation speech becomes one with all that is known, this world of known objects, the meditator becomes one with this world. The world will help him in all possible manner. All that is yet to be known is known through the mind as it comes under the purview of the mind. This is the similarity be- tween the two. Through this contemplation all that is yet to be known is absorbed by the mind which becomes one with it. Just as mind cannot be understood as clearly as speech is understood, all that is yet to be known remains vague and less clear than what is known. This is another similarity for contemplation. As a result of the said medi- tation, the mind becomes one with all objects of desire. Now, prana is to be meditated as all that is unknown. As already stated, prana is superior to speech and mind. prana may be said to be in a different realm altogether over which speech and mind have no control. It remains unknown to speech and mind. This is the similarity to help contemplation on the identity of the prana with all that is unknown. prana in the universal aspect is hiranyagarbha which cannot be known by the individual intellect. This contemplation results in the identification with hiranyagarbha.

Another section in this meditation which also forms part of this vidya is on the identification of speech with earth and fire, mind with heaven and sun and prana with waters and moon. The whole earth should be meditated as the abode of speech, and fire as the light or the luminous organ. This is a very subtle form of meditation which results in the control of the two elements, earth and fire. Similarly, meditation on mind as non-different from heaven, its abode, and sun, its luminous nature, results in the elimination of all rivalry and enemity. Likewise, prana is to be meditated as one with water its abode, and moon its light. prana is said to be the essence of water and moon is said to be watery because of its cooling nature.

To the seeker who practises this meditation as given in this vidya, there will be no distinction among speech, mind and prana and the three worlds, because he has realised their essential oneness. He knows that all that is here is one single universal Principle. To such a knower, there is nothing impossible to be achieved by his speech, mind and prana. Whatever he speaks, thinks and does brings in the desired result.

68. NETI-NETI-VIDYA

('NOT THIS, NOT THIS'-MEDITATION)

"athata adeso neti neti na hyetasmaditi netyanyat paramasti atha namadheyam satyasya satyam-iti prana vai satyam teshamesha satyam-now, therefore, follows the instruction on the supreme Brahman: 'Not this, Not this'; this is the best description of Brahman, for there is no other description more appropriate than this. Now, Its secret name is 'the Truth of truth'. The prana, vital vital power, is the truth and the Supreme is the Truth or Essence of that prana." This meditation occurs in the Brihadaranyaka- upanishad mantras II-iii-6, III-ix-26, IV-ii-4, IV-iv-22 and IV-v-15. Some translate the word 'iti' in this mantra as 'thus' and put it as 'Not thus, Not thus'.

The process of all devout meditation has always to be by and through the mind. But, the aim is to transcend the mind. Mind can cognise only things external or internal. This idea of 'external' and 'internal' is generally with reference to one's body alone. Even the so-called 'external' objects are cognised by the mind alone and hence they are really 'internal' concepts. To the Consciousness which is the illuminator of the mind, both the 'external' and 'internal' are really 'external' in one sense. Consciousness alone ex- presses as the subject and object. An object always requires the subject to cognise it. Without the subject, object has no existence. But, subject can exist without object, although in that case, the subject may lose its subjectivity. All this is our daily experience. In the waking and dream states, the whole world stands as 'object' to the 'subject' 'I'. In the deep sleep state, this 'object' viz., the world disappears or appears to dissolve itself, and the 'T', the subject also seems to dissolve itself. It does not really dissolve. It only loses its subject-hood, because of the absence of the object. The 'T', the pure consciousness can never become non-existent, for who will then cognise that non-existence! There can only be the absence of particularised consciousness with its

subject and object, but never the absence of Consciousness as such, the pure Awareness.

Our senses always see only objects. And on their reports, the mind also says that there are real objects outside. Modern science says that the objects we see are not really so solid and substantial as they appear to our senses, but are really whirlpools of forces or energy. The Upanishads go still further and declare that they are not even energy but pure Consciousness. Both matter and energy are the limiting adjuncts of Consciousness. A man is, therefore, not a man but Consciousness masquerading as man; a tree is not really a tree but Consciousness appearing as a tree; a mountain is not a mountain but it is Consciousness in the disguise of a mountain. This is the case with all objects without any exception. Therefore, to call a man a man, a tree a tree and a mountain a mountain, is utter untruth, a fabrication and a lie. While every so-called object is really Consciousness, we call them as objects with different names. Nobody would like to be called by what he is not. The reaction of committing this mistake is bound to be adverse. And it is this adverse reaction that takes the form of pain and misery which we experience daily from the time we wake up till we go to sleep. We are alone to be blamed for this state of affairs. This same Upanishad puts this fact point-blank when it says: "Sarvam tam para- dad-yo-anyatra-atmanah sarvam veda-One who thinks that all this is different from one's Self, the Pure Consciousness, and acts accordingly, that one is abandoned by all this" (IV-5-vii). How much truth is contained in the wise state- ment of the Upanishad! The cause of our suffering in this world is, therefore, seeing the world not as it really is, but as it appears to the senses.

Our present daily experience is not in consonance with the nature of Reality. Therefore, our vision has to be reversed. To the man, who is absorbed in the sense world, all this will sound very strange, fantastic, if not non-sensical. To cure a disease permanently, there is no other way except the removal of the root cause of the disease. The

meditation prescribed through the neti-neti method, removes the root cause which is nescience or ignorance of the Truth. This is the best meditation, because as the mantra itself says, this is the best way of describing the Supreme on which the meditation is done. Every 'object', whether gross or subtle, a physical object or a mental concept, a name or a thought, is a limitation superimposed on Consciousness. From the most insignificant concept of an atom or a sub- atomic particle up to the highest concept of hiranyagarbha, the cosmic person, everything is a limitation of the Infinite. All limitations are eliminated by this process of neti neti. When the scriptures refer to the Absolute which is beyond words, they do it only through words such as 'the Supreme', 'Brahman', 'the Atman', etc. Here also there is super-imposition. It is impossible to describe the true nature of the Supreme free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts. The only way left is to describe It as 'not this, not this', the term 'this' signifying all or everything that is humanly comprehensible and also that which is incomprehensible.

Having obtained from the preceptor and the scriptures, a theoretical, indirect knowledge of the nature of the Abso- lute, as the pure Existence, the unmoded Consciousness, the uncaused Bliss, the Infinite and the Immortal, one should with a calm and peaceful mind, start practising this meditation. Why does one negate everything? Because nothing can satisfy the conditions of Immortality and Infinity. The meditation of merging the gross into the subtle, the subtle into the causal and finally, the causal in the Absolute, is only an off-shoot of this neti-neti meditation. Starting from the senses, one merges them in the objects, then the objects are merged in the mind, the mind in the intellect, the intellect into the mahat or hiranyagarbha, hiranyagarbha into 'the Unmanifested' and lastly, 'the Unmanifested' into the Supreme.

The transcendence of the five kosas, the sheaths which cover the Atman as it were, is still another form of the 'Neti Neti'. This is given

in the Taittiriya-upanishad, chap-ter II. Man may be said to consist of five sheaths, viz., the physical sheath, the vital-force sheath, the mind-sheath, the intellect sheath and the bliss-sheath. The Atman is innermost to all the sheaths. The Atman being the subtlest, pervades all the sheaths and still remains untouched by them. By negating each sheath as not the Atman, through medi- tation, one reaches their essence, one's own Self.

The negative attributes of turiya, referred to in the Mandukya-upanishad, also have to be combined in this medi- tation. The term turiya means the Atman. Those attri- butes are (i) Atman is not conscious of the internal world (nantah prajnam), (ii) not conscious of the external world (nabahiprajnam), (iii) not conscious of both the worlds (na ubhayatah prajnam), (iv) not a mass of consciousness (na prajnanaghanam), (v) not simple consciousness (na prajnam), (vi) not unconsciousness (na aprajnam), (vii) unseen (adrishtam), (viii) beyond all empirical dealings (avyavaharyam), (ix) beyond the grasp of the organs (agrahyam), (x) uninferable (alakshanam), (xi) un- thinkable (achintyam), (xii) indescribable (avyapadesyam), (xiii) cessation of all phenomena (prapancha upasamam) and (xiv) non-dual (advaitam).

A similar set of negative attributes is given in the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad section 8 of chapter III which also has to be combined in this meditation. Therein occurs a sublime description of the supreme Consciousness negating all attributes such as grossness, minuteness, shortness, long- ness, colour, nature of being oily, shadowy and dark, having the characteristics of air and ether, the eater and the eaten, having attachment, savour and odour, having eyes, ears, vocal organ, mind and mouth, having luminosity, having interior and exterior, and so on. Similarly, those negative attributes contained in chap- ter III-9-xxvi of the same Upanishad also have to be included in this meditation on 'neti, neti'. They are imper- ceptibility, indestructibility, imperishability, unattached nature and Its being not bound by anything.

The Kathopanishad mantra 1-3-xv also gives a set of negative attributes such as: asabdam-soundless, asparsam -touchless, arupam-formless, avyayam-undiminishing, arasam-tasteless, agantham-odourless, anadi-without beginning, anantam-without end, and mahatah param- distinct from mahat, hiranyagarbha, the whole universe.

The Mundakopanishad verses I-1-vi and II-1-ii also deal with a set of negative attributes of Brahman: tadadresyam, agrahyam, agotram, avarnam, achakshuh-srotram, apani- padam, avyayam, amurtah, ajah, aprahan, aparokshah, akshara- paratah ungraspable, without any source, without features, eyes, ears, hands and feet, un- diminishing, transcendental, unborn, formless, without vital force and mind, and beyond the superior, immutable maya.

There are similar negative attributes in many other Upanishads also. All of them have to be combined in this meditation. Some may be repetitions. But all new ones found in each Upanishad have to be taken into account and a combined list of all the negative attributes should be pre- pared for the purpose of this meditation.

We have already referred to the logic behind the seemingly uncommon methodology adopted by the wise seers of the Upanishads, for the realisation of the Absolute. The Absolute falls not within the purview of anything limited by the individual intellect. This meditation has to be practised not only at fixed allotted hours, but also at all other available occasions. The present practice of seeing the 'objects' should give place to seeing through the objects. Every object is a window, as it were, through which Consciousness peeps through. When the objectivity in the object is set aside, what remains is Consciousness which becomes one with the Consciousness of the meditator. When we see a cloth, we can see the thread of which it is made. But we generally miss the thread which gives reality to the cloth. Cloth cannot exist without thread. Sugar dolls can- not exist without the sugar of which they are made. Still the child does not see

the sugar but sees only the colour and form of the dolls and calls them a cat, a dog and so on. Even so, man in ignorance sees the name and form of the limiting adjuncts and refuses to cognise the Essence in them. In this meditation, he has to tell his mind that whatever it perceives with or without the help of the senses, is not real. The Reality is 'not this'. When everything is thus negated, what remains? Is it not a void? No, for he who has negated everything including his body and mind, remains. This that remains should not be confused with the intellect or the ego principle. That also being a limiting adjunct has been eliminated as 'not this'. That which re- mains cannot be denoted by any distinguishing features such as name, form, action, species, etc. Words indicate objects through one or more of these features. But, the Supreme has none of these characteristics. Hence, it is impossible to describe that which remains after the negation of all this. It is however given names such as the Self, the pure Consciousness, etc., only for the sake of communication and instruction. It has to be 'experienced' by oneself when the mind and the intellect subside through this meditation.

Some argue that the whole universe being negated by the first neti, the second neti negates Brahman, the pure Consciousness, as otherwise it would be a meaningless word, and therefore, Brahman also comes within the sweep of negation. This is neither reasonable nor acceptable. Brahman is that which cannot be negated. It is beyond all negations. It is that which remains after all negations. It is the substratum of all those which are phenomenal and therefore negatable. The second negation by the repetition of 'Not this' serves to strengthen the first 'Not this' which negates all. Brahman being not an object of perception, cannot be indicated by the word 'this' or 'thus'. Or, the second 'Not this' may be interpreted as denying the 'absence of the world' which results by the negation of the whole world by the first 'Not this'. When the virat is transcended, one and hiranyagarbha-consciousness is transcended, one reaches the isvara-

consciousness, the abhava, non-exist-ence of the whole universe in its gross and subtle forms. This is not the Ultimate Supreme. Hence, it also is to be negated and this is done through the second 'Not this'. Or, the repetition of 'Not this' can be justified with refer- ence to the division of the whole universe into the cate- gories all matter having forms and all that is formless. (Br. up. II-3-i). The first 'Not this' negates all those which have forms and the second negates all the formless.

In this connection a story is cited by Sri Acharya Sankara: A man was serving his master. One day, he did some foolish action. The master who came to know of it, in order to chide him, called him and said: 'Are you a man?' This servant after sometime, remembering these words of the master started thinking seriously: 'Am I not a man? And if I am not, what am I then?" He could not clear this doubt. He, therefore, went to one of his intimate friends in whom he had great faith and narrated the incident and asked the friend: 'My dear friend, what am I?' Now this friend started telling him: 'You are not an animal', 'You are not a tree', 'You are not a mountain' and so on, and thus denied all except 'man'. He did not deny his man-hood. All the rest he denied. If by this denial the servant did not understand that he was a man, then even if he was told 'You are a man', he would not have understood it-says the great Acharya. Thus he makes it very clear that through this meditation on 'Not this, Not this', the intelligent seeker is sure to know his real nature as the Self that remains after the negation of every- thing, That which cannot be negated.

To quote again the great Acharya Sankara-"brahmai- vaham-idam jagat-cha sakalam chinmatra-vistaritam-I am Brahman alone, also all this universe which is the ex- pansion of the pure consciousness" (manisha panchakam, a quintuplet on meditation). The world is really an ex- pansion of Consciousness. The world in its present form seen by the ignorant as something different from him, ex- ternal to him as the cause of suffering, is that which has to be negated by the spiritual aspirant. The scriptures always use figures of speech or symbols. One

such is the description of kali, the goddess of destruction, with a terrible from with her darting, red, flame-like tongue and all kinds of deadly weapons of destruction in her innumer- able hands and a garland of skulls round her neck, most gruesome only to those who do not take pains to under- stand their significance. To the discriminative sadhaka, She is not at all fearful and terrible. She represents the destruction of all this false universe. Why should one be afraid of Her form! To Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa goddess kali whom he worshipped, was his innermost Self who has swallowed the whole universe in one gulp. To him, the goddess was, therefore, all bliss and all peace. When the sage Totapuri initiated him into Advaitic non- dual, oneness, it is said that Sri Ramakrishna at first found the form of his goddess an obstruction to his merging the mind in nirvikalpa Consciousness, free of all mental vrittis. Then the guru in the form of Totapuri in- structed him to use the sword of discrimination to cut the form of the goddess. The disciple was too familiar with such a mode of operation, for he had already cut asunder the whole universe and was even prepared to cut his own head with the sword when he failed to have the vision of the Mother's reality. He once snatched the sword, held in the left hand of Mother's image and tried to sever was then revealed. his own head. The Mother's form was then revealed. Totapuri wanted him to repeat the act on a more intense form, in a more elevated plane of consciousness, with the subtle sword of pure discrimination, to eliminate even the subtlest form. And he succeeded and realised the non-dual Truth as 'I am verily Brahman and the whole world is non-different from me being the expansion of the very same Brahman, the sat-chit-ananda'.

The result of this 'neti, neti' meditation is sadyo-mukti, immediate liberation, complete freedom from the shackles of space, time and causation, even while remaining in this world, in this body. The mandukya-karika says: Taking the help of the incomprehensibility of Brahman, the Upanishads try to explain the knowledge of Brahman

through various means, and then the reality of all those means is negated when the ever-revealed Brahman reveals Himself as it were.

69. MAITREYI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO MAITREYI)

maitreyi-vidya occurs both in the fourth section of the second chapter and also in the fifth section of the fourth chapter of Brihadaranyaka-upanishad. Brahman which is the subject matter of the vidya is given in the earlier section as the proposition to be proved and established, and in the latter section it is given as the conclusion arrived at after elaborate reasoning and argumentation contained in the intervening sections. The truth that Self-knowledge together with renunciation is the means for Immortality, is clearly shown through scriptural statements as well as logical reasoning. This vidya is the crest jewel in the crown of the Upanishadic vidyas.

In a short mantra in this Upanishad (I-4-viii), it is declared that to a man in this world his own Atman is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth and dearer than everything else and one should, therefore, meditate on the Atman alone as dear. This vidya may be said to be, in one sense, a detailed exposition of that short aphoristic mantra.

The great sage Yajnavalkya gave this vidya to his own wife Maitreyi, an ardent seeker after the highest Truth and a fully qualified disciple having had the privi- lege of living with the sage ever since her marriage in her early age. Because the sage found in her a fit receptacle for the supreme Knowledge, the Knowledge of Atman-Brahman, he gladly condescended to instruct her on It. She had converted her whole life, a life of devotion and service to her husband, into an intense form of continuous spiritual sadhana. It is therefore no wonder that the sage himself a jivanmukta who had initiated king Janaka and many others into Supreme Truth, decided to instruct her before he finally left his home to embrace vidvat sannyasa in order to pass on to the next and the final state of videha-mukti. Here, a srotriya-brahmanishtha guru, a master well versed in the scriptures and established in the supreme Brahman, initiates a fully qualified

disciple possess- ing the four-fold qualifications of viveka, vairagya, shad- sampat and mumukshutva-discrimination, dispassion, the six-fold virtues and intense aspiration for the highest Truth.

The instruction starts with an analysis of one's love towards other beings and objects. What is love? Why should one love another? What is it that makes a person love an- other person or object? The love of a wife for her husband- is it for the sake of the husband or for something else and if it is the latter, what is that something else? On a thread- bare analysis of this love, love that is well known in this world, it can be seen that it is not for the sake of the object or person loved. A woman loves her husband if he provides her with all her necessities of life and looks after her welfare and comforts and satisfies her sex-desire. She never loves a husband who does not or who is incapable of fulfilling these conditions. This being a matter of common experience, is well known to all. This proves the fact that her love towards her husband is not for his sake but for her own sake, for fulfilling her needs. For whose sake these needs are fulfilled? They cannot be for their own sake, but they are for the in- dweller in the body, the Atman. This is stated in the mantra I-4-viii referred to above, which states that the Atman in oneself is the dearest among all lovable objects and it is for the sake of this Atman everything else is loved.

Similar is the case of love for all objects external to oneself. The Upanishad in II-4 and IV-5 cites a number of objects of love such as a wife for her husband, son for the father and mother, wealth, animals, other persons, this world as well as the heavenly worlds, gods, scriptures, and finally comes to the conclusion that all objects and beings are dear to one, not for the sake of those objects or beings, but for the sake of one's own Self.

The urge for union with an object or person by possess- ing it or him or her is not so simple as it is understood by the ignorant. It is the cosmic force which is hidden in all beings and objects and it is this which is behind the urge. The mistake committed by man is that

instead of loving that hidden cosmic, eternal entity in the 'other', be it a person or object, he loves the name and form which are illusory appear- ances covering, as it were, the Reality which is Love or Bliss itself,

A spiritual aspirant should have a clear grasp of this philosophy of love to overcome the distractions of the mind which stand in the way of success in meditation. Mind is prone to run after its objects of love. The fact that, when one sits for meditation on God, the mind slips out of one's control and is after some person or object, reveals that that person or object is more lovable to the mind than God, the object chosen for meditation. If the mind is educated about the all-inclusive and blissful nature of God, how can it leave that and go out after the tinsels of the world? The Upani- shad teaches that the Atman is the most lovable, more lovable than the most lovable objects, nay It is Love itself, Bliss itself. When one knows this for certain and when one's mind is convinced of this truth, success in meditation is also certain.

Having come to this firm conviction about the blissful nature of the Self for the sake of which everything else in this world becomes dear and lovable, Maitreyi receives from her husband-preceptor the greatest of all spiritual instructions. This Self, says Yajnavalkya, should be realised, thro- ugh hearing, reflection and deep meditation. This realisation, though usually referred to as 'direct experience', is no experience in the ordinary sense of the term. All our present experience is sensory and psychological and therefore indirect. No experience can therefore be said to be really direct. Be- tween the experiencer and the object of experience, there is always the mind with or without one or other of the five senses. The experience of the Self is something super-sensory and supra-mental and hence said to be beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is immediate, rather non-mediate experience where the senses and the mind have no part to play and they cease to function, as it were. All mental and

sensory experiences involve, besides the senses and the mind, the duality of subject, the experiencer and the object, the experienced. This duality is absent in the unique experience of the Self. It is non-dual experience if we may call it so. The subject or the experiencer becomes one with the object or the experienced. The meditator is no longer different from that which is meditated upon. The Self experiences the Self, says the scripture.

This supreme state is to be attained through the practice of hearing the 'truth' from one's preceptor, reflecting upon that which is heard with the help of the scriptural declara- tions and reasoning by a keen and pure intellect, and finally through deep meditation on the 'truth' which has thus been heard and reflected upon.

Continuing the instruction for meditation, Sage Yajna- valkya says how all this is but the Self even now when we perceive a world of evanescent multiplicity as though separate and distinct. Because pure Consciousness alone is in every- thing, we have perforce to conclude that everything is That alone. If an object cannot be perceived apart from 'some- thing', that 'something' is the essence of the former. The Sage gives the example of the general sound and the particular notes produced by beating a drum, blowing a conch and playing on a Vina or guitar. These instruments have particular notes of their own, all of which are included in the sound in general without which they cannot have their exist- ence. Even while hearing the particular notes, we are hearing the general sound alone on which appear the different notes. Even so, while we are seeing a heterogenous world, we are seeing only the pure Consciousness, the Atman-Brahman.

What was the condition of the universe prior to its appearance or creation? It was pure Consciousness in a state of homogeneity from which have come out these worlds, like smoke, sparks, etc., coming out from a blazing fire. They have come out like the breath of the supreme Self, without the slightest effort. All this relative existence in all its stages, gross, sutble and causal, is nothing but mere names and

forms of the one, non-dual Self. These names and forms are also nothing but the Self.

After dissolution also, when the whole universe merges, as it were, in its Cause, it (the universe) remains as pure Consciousness. Just as the ocean is the meeting place, the place of dissolution or unification of water in all its forms such as rivers, tanks, springs and the rest, even so, is this pure Consciousness the place of dissolution of the whole universe. To cite only one example, say forms we know that the organ of sight, the eye, is the cause for the perception of all forms, beautiful and ugly, big and small, and so on. During dissolution all these forms merge in the eye, for these forms are, as it were, only modifications or effects of the eye which may be said to be their cause. This eye then merges in the mind, because without the mind it cannot function. Mind is subtler than the eye. The cause is always subtler than the effect. The subtle mind then merges in the intellect which is still subtler. And this intellect besides which there is nothing else since the mind, the eye and the forms have merged into it, merges in Consciousness. Similar is the case with the others such as touch, taste, smell, and sound and their corresponding sense organs of skin, palate, nose and ear. All these finally become one with the pure Consciousness.

Thus in all the three conditions, viz., during the existence of the apparent universe, before its creation, and after its dissolution, it is one with the pure Consciousness. Thus should one meditate. Nothing can be perceived apart from the Self which is another name for the pure Consciousness. Whether we are in the waking or dreaming or deep sleep state, we are perceiving only the Self, the pure Consciousness. Therefore, one should avoid the mistake of seeing anything as other to the Self at any time. Man in his ignorance always considers the objects of the world as different from his Self and thus commits the mistake and sin for which he suffers this life of transmigration. As action and reaction are equal and opposite in the physical realm, it is

much more so in the spiritual world. When I think that an object before me is different from me, that object also considers me as different from it and the result is mutual repulsion, each ousting the other. This is the painful sam- sara. This meditation on the non- difference of the world and the Self is the key to get out of the pains and miseries of the world.

The result of such meditation is given in the succeeding portion of the mantra. The Upanishad says through the mouth of sage Yajnavalkya addressing his wife Maitreyi: "When the Self, O Maitreyi, is thus realised through hear- ing, reflection and deep meditation, all this that is now considered in ignorance as other to the Self, is also known, for there is nothing else but the Self. The meditator becomes one with the universe and the universe becomes non-different from the meditator. He experiences directly "I am the all in the all." He realises that the universe which he has so long considered as external to himself, is nothing but his own innermost Self. His own body, the vital force, organs mind, intellect and ego shed their separate individual nature and become one with the Self. This supramundane experience is beautifully described by the great Acharya Sankara in his Vivekachudamani thus: "buddhirvinashta galita pravr- ttir- brahmatmanorekatayadhigatya; idam na janepianidam na jane kim va kiyadva sukhamasti-aparam-having realised the oneness of Brahman and the Atman, the modifications of the intellect have completely ceased and their interaction with the objects has melted away. I neither know 'this', nor the 'not-this'. What is this Bliss par excellence? Where is the limit of this supreme Bliss? I do not know". The next verse explains further this supreme, unique Experience: "vacha vaktum- asakyam-eva manasa mantum na va sakyate, sva- nanda'mrita pura pumbhorasi-pasa-ra- ahma'mbudher-vaibhavam; varshika-sila-bhavam bhajanme mano, yas- ya'msa'msa-lave vilinam- adhuna'nanda'tmana nirvrtam-Like the hail-stone dropping into the ocean disappears in the ocean by melting into it, even so the mind has

merged in an infinite- simally small droplet of that infinite Bliss and I am now im-mersed in that Bliss without the least trace of any modifica- tion of the mind. The supreme glory and magnificence of Brahman, filled with the torrents of the immortal nectar, cannot be described in words, nor even thought of by the mind (481 and 482).

Sage Yajnavalkya says to his wife: "O my dear, after the Self attains this non-dual oneness, the elements consti- tuting the individual personality having merged in their universal counterparts, there is no more knowledge (na pretya samjasti)." This statement raises a doubt in the mind of Maitreyi which she gives expression to in the words: "O venerable Sir, just here, you have confounded me. I do not clearly grasp what you have just now described. You have told me again and again that the Atman, the pure Conscious- ness, the Knowledge Supreme, is eternal and immortal. Now you seem to say that knowledge would be destroyed when the Atman is realised. This statement of yours seems to shatter all my previous convictions."

In the reply given by Yajnavalkya to this doubt of Maitreyi, introduced by the Upanishad in order to explain further, the nature of the Supreme, the Absolute, we have a description of the Reality, an exposition which is considered as one among the best and the most astounding and awe- inspiring declarations of the Vedas.

Yajnavalkya says: "O beloved Maitreyi, I say nothing that is confusing. The Atman is certainly imperishable and indestructible. When in the direct realisation of the Atman, everything is seen as that non-dual, pure, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute, all particularised, individualised, objective and subjective knowledge ceases to exist as some- thing different from the Atman."

The generally known concept of knowledge is know- ledge of objects such as knowledge of a table, knowledge of science, knowledge of music and so on. This knowledge rises and sets. It is there for sometime and then disappears. This is knowing 'of something', and

when there is 'no something', there is no 'knowing of something'. But there is the knowledge that 'there is no something' and 'no knowing of something". This knowledge is never lost. It always shines without rising and setting.

"Only when there is duality, as it were, due to ig- norance, then alone one sees another, one smells another, one tastes another, one thinks of another, one knows an- other, and so on and so forth. But when all has become the non-dual Atman, then what is there to be seen and who is there to see! Who should smell what! There is no one to taste and there is nothing to be tasted. So is the case with all the other organs and their objects. There is no one separate from the Atman to speak and there is neither the organ of speech nor speech itself separate and distinct from the Atman. There is neither the ear nor any sound apart from the Atman. There is no mind to think and no thought to be thought of, for they have lost their individual exist- ence. Therefore, there is no separate entity to be known, neither is there an individual intellect to know. O Maitreyi, by what can one know that supreme Knower who knows all this that is known! This Atman is the Absolute which is best described as 'not this', 'not this'. It is incomprehensible, because it is not an object that could be comprehended by the individual intellect, not even by the universal hiranya- garbha, the cosmic intelligence. So scriptures say that even Brahma or the Vedas cannot know the Absolute. It is im- perishable because it is eternal and does not perish. The Atman being partless can never die or change. It has no birth also. It is beyond time. It is unattached, because there is nothing besides It to attach itself to. Nothing can attach itself even to space. And the Atman being subtler than space, being the cause of space, can anything attach itself to It! It is unfettered, being non-dual and beyond all bondage. It is neither pained nor injured, for It transcends both the physical and subtle bodies and even the causal." The sage concludes his instructions: "O Maitreyi, 'vijnataram are kena vijaniyat-by what should one know the

Knower! Thus, my dear, I have instructed you on the Supreme. It is the only means of attaining immortality. It is Immortality."

An unwary and uninitiated aspirant hearing this grand description is likely to suddenly jump to the wrong and unwarranted conclusion that the Absolute, the Atman, is a complete non-entity, a void. Such a conclusion is a mental concept arising out of the deluded and clouded intellect, still under the grip of the demon of primal nescience, mula avidya. Let this intellect now put this question to itself: Who knows this non-entity or void? There is none, being complete void as he has alleged. Then how can such a state- ment be made? This intellect cannot, by any stretch of reasoning, deny the knower of the void the existence of which it admits. This Knower who knows the existence of the void, i.e., the non-existence of the whole universe. other to Him, is the Absolute which the Upanishad pro- claims at the top of its voice. Everything else considered separate and external is non-existent and if it is seen, then it is unreal like a mirage. But really there cannot be any- thing other to the infinite, non-dual Atman which includes everything in It as one with It, and at the same time, excludes nothing as there exists nothing other to It, and remains transcending all exclusion and inclusion and every- thing relative and conditioned in this universe. Thus this meditation leads to the supreme state wherein the meditator finds everything in the Self and the Self in everything. He experiences that the universe is the expression of the Absolute, and therefore, the Absolute alone is. The universe has no existence separate from the Absolute. It is in this sense that the scriptures say that Consciousness is the universe and the universe is Consciousness.

Why is it then that this Truth is not easily known by all? This is due to the mistake in the means adopted to know It. We have been habituated in innumerable past lives and also in this life, to search for objects external to us through the senses and the mind. And we adopt the same means to know the Atman also. Herein lies the mistake. The Atman is neither a limited object nor is It external to the seeker. It is

the 'Whole' and It is the inner- most Essence in the seeker. It is nearer than the nearest and inner than the innermost part of our body. It is deeper than the deepest and subtler than the subtlest in us. pervades all bodies like the thread pervading all clothes. How can we say that It is unknown to us! It is the knower, known and knowledge, all merged into the non-dual Exist- ence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. It is akhanda-eka-rasa- unbroken, one Essence. The meditator who meditates thus become That which alone IS.

The same meditation is given in a more descriptive form in mantras xxiii to xxxii, of section 3 of chapter IV, which say that when there is particularised of individuality there is no consciousness. The context is the exposition of the condition of deep sleep state by sage Yajna- valkya to king Janaka. The Upanishad states that in the state of deep sleep, the Atman does not see, hear, taste, smell, touch, think and know anything other than It, be- cause of unity and homogeneity. It is self-effulgent, pure intelligence by nature. A prima facie question is raised here: If intelligence or consciousness is the very nature of the Atman, like light and heat are of fire, how could the Atman in the deep sleep state, in spite of the unity and homogeneity, give up its inherent nature and remain without seeing, hearing and knowing? And if it is argued that as fire does not at any time give up its nature of heat and light, the Atman also does not give up its own nature of consciousness in the state of deep sleep, how is it that It does not see, hear and know anything in particular? Is it not self-contradictory to say in the same breath that pure Consciousness is the nature of the Atman and again It does not see, hear, or know? This apparent contradiction is explained away by the Sage. He says that the Self is that supreme, eternal, self-effulgent, immortal, non-dual Experience wherein contradictions, doubts and all other irreconcilables are resolved and wherein the non-dual Absolute reigns supreme. In the state of deep sleep, while one does not see anything, he still sees everything. Seeing he does not see. It is a single

simultaneous comprehension and not successive seeing one object after another as in the states of waking and dream. That which is 'seen' in the condition of deep sleep is the 'seer', and therefore, there seems to be no 'seen' apart and distinct from the 'seer'. The Atman can never at any time remain oblivious of Itself, for It is pure Awareness itself. Therefore, It is always the 'Seer', the 'Seen' and the 'Seeing'. There is really nothing other to It in the condition of deep sleep and, hence, it is also said that It does not see, for seeing usually presupposes some thing seen. How can we say that the Atman sees the Atman! The subject cannot become the object and vice versa the object cannot at anytime remain as the subject. This experience in deep sleep seems to be unlike the experi- ences which we imagine in the waking and dream states wherein there appears the triad of experiencer, experienced and experiencing. In one sense, we may say that in deep sleep the objects merge in the subject and, therefore, the latter does not move towards the former as it appears to happen in the waking and dream states. When the subject which is the mind does not move, the senses which always follow the footsteps of the mind, also cease to move towards their respective objects and it is said that the man does not see, does not hear, and so on.

Consciousness is eternal. It can be compared to, say, the fixed white screen in the film show behind the moving shadows, but for which the show itself would cease to be. When the show stops the shadows cease to exist but the screen remains unchanged. In deep sleep, the con- tent of knowing becomes merged with the process of knowing and the process of knowing becomes merged in the source of knowledge. In this condition where the knower, known and knowing have become one, who can say whether that which remains is the knower or the known or the know- ing! It is a transcendental state which the mind, remain- ing in the present condition of ignorance in the space-time complex, cannot comprehend as it comprehends other

objects. And when the mind itself transcends this complex, it does not remain distinct to know what that supreme state is which alone IS.

Another example which would help us to understand this condition, is the ocean and the waves. When the bubbles, foam and waves of this apparent external world of duality of the dream and waking states, subside in the ocean of Consciousness in deep sleep, there remains nothing other to Consciousness. Through meditation when one becomes identified with this Consciousness, one is liberated at that very moment. This is stated to be brahma-loka, the world that is Brahman. This is the supreme splendour that is Brahman. This is the supreme Bliss that is Brahman. The myriads of universes with their creators, protectors and destroyers and the innumerable beings therein live and enjoy happiness in a droplet of this Bliss, says the Upanishad.

70. MADHU-VIDYA-2

(MEDITATION ON HONEY-2)

This is the secret meditation which was taught by sage Dadhyach well versed in atharva-veda, to the twin gods, the Asvins. It is described in section 5 of chapter II of of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad.

There is an interesting story about it. There was a sage by name Dadhyach, the disciple of the great Daiva Athar- vana. He was established in the Knowledge of Brahman here indicated by the term madhu-vidya. Once Indra, the king of the gods in the heavens and who is said to be the king of the three worlds, visited the sage Dadhyach to pay his respects. The Sage was much pleased with Indra and promised to give any boon of his choice. Indra prayed to be initiated into brahma-vidya. The Sage never expected that Indra would ask for this boon. The Sage knew very well that Indra had then not got the necessary qualifications to receive this great Knowledge. But the Sage had made a promise to give any boon he asked. He could not go back on his words. Therefore, though unwilling, he started to initiate Indra in the Supreme Knowledge. During the course of his instruction, when the Sage was dealing with vairagya, dispassion, a bitch chanced to pass by followed by a dog wagging its tail. The Sage naturally cited that as an example of the sex-urge in Indra and in all beings. Indra not being a qualified disciple, misunderstood the Sage and took it as a personal insult. Overpowered by anger he told the Sage: "O Sage! stop all your instructions. Enough of your brahma-vidya. Don't you know that I am the king of the three worlds! And you dare insult me be- fore my very nose. I hereby warn you that if you teach this brahma-vidya to any one else hereafter, I will cut off your head." So saying Indra departed.

Some say that Indra was then a qualified disciple and got himself initiated into brahma-vidya. But being very selfish, he did not want others to get this Knowledge from the Sage, and therefore, threatened him with the dire consequence of his teaching this great Knowledge

to others. Whatever may be the cause, the Sage thenceforward could not instruct brahma-vidya to others for fear of losing his head.

After a few days, the two celestials, the Asvins approach- ed the Sage for being initiated into this great Knowledge. They were qualified students. But the Sage could not im- part the vidya to them, because of Indra's threat. He told the Asvins all that had happened and explained his difficulty. The Sage said: "I am willing to instruct you but Indra will certainly cut off my head." To this, the Asvins said that they could manage this easily for they had divine powers. They themselves severed the head of the Sage and fixed the head of a horse on his trunk. The severed human head was kept safe in a secret place. With the head of the horse, sage Dadhyach imparted this vidya to the Asvins. Indra appeared and cut off the head. It was the horse-head which was severed. Now the Asvins replaced the original head on the Sage. Then onwards he was freely imparting this vidya to other disciples who approached him.

Sage Kakshivat who visualised some of these mantras occurring in the rigveda has said: rigveda has said: "The Supreme has assumed the likeness of each form. He has put on all these forms in order to manifest His otherwise unmanifest and transcendental form. On account of His identification with the names and forms, He appears as this manifold universe. To Him are yoked, like horses to a chariot, the ten organs which are therefore, called hari. They are infinite in number. He himself has become the organs. The Supreme is without cause, without effect, without interior and without exterior. This supreme Self that perceives everything is Brahman. This is the sum and substance of all teachings."

Honey, a very sweet article, perhaps the sweetest among the sweet things, is here a symbol for the Self which is the dearest to all among all objects of the world. The mind always goes to its object of love. This is the reason why scriptures instruct to start meditation on one's ishta devata the tutelary deity, that deity on whom one has the greatest

love, faith and adoration. Very often the neo- phytes fail to concentrate on the object of meditation, be- cause they do not have the maximum love for the object of meditation. They have greater love for some other objects.

Honey is the support for the bees, being its food. Here in this vidya also this word 'honey' means support, the support for everything in the universe. The first mantra in section 5 of chapter II, instructs meditation on earth as honey to all beings and all beings as honey to earth. The earth is absorbed in every being and every being is absorbed in earth. To put it in different words, we should meditate on the earth element as containing all beings and all beings containing the earth element. There is in the earth element a luminous conscious Being which is its essence. Similarly, there is the same conscious Being in the body of all beings. This conscious Being is to be meditated as honey to all beings and all beings as honey to It. This four-fold division -the earth, the conscious being in the earth, the beings, and the conscious principle in them-are to be meditated as identical with the Atman, the supreme Brahman. This is a description of the co-relation between the individuals and their cosmic counterparts. One should meditate on the immanence of the conscious principle in both the microcosm and the macrocosm. It is the same consciousness that appears as the subject and the object. It is this principle that connects the parts with the whole. This is the all. This is the all in the all. This is called the Atman, because It is immanent in all. This is also named Brahman because It is great and fills everything. It is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. In this meditation, one should know that everything depends on everything else, and that all is nothing but the Self. This section of the Upanishad gives a magnificent description of the true nature of this universe, the Reality, the Essence under the epithet madhu, honey. When one touches anything, one really touches everything in the cosmos, because the cosmos is one organic whole, the so-called parts of which are inex- tricably

connected, so much so, that no part can be dis- connected from the 'Whole' by any means whatsoever. When one sees an object one sees all objects because everything in essence is the Atman, the madhu, honey.

The Upanishad enumerates a number of other items for meditation, such as water, fire, air, sun, directions, moon, light, sound, space, law, truth, human and other species and the cosmic body. These with their counterparts in the individual such as seed, organ of speech, the vital force, the eye, ear, mind, touch, sound in the body, space in the heart etc., as also the conscious principle in both the uni- versal and the individual, are but the one non-dual Atman- Brahman. When this ultimate principle is forgotten and the individual alone is taken into consideration keeping the rest of the whole cosmos, as though, something separate and unconnected, we are said to be in samsara. Therefore, the Upanishad instructs that the cosmic Consciousness should be brought in as the connecting link between any- thing and everything, as madhu, the essential principle which pervades, percolates and envelops the whole universe. This madhu, the Atman is connected with each and every object, like the hub to the spokes of a wheel. In this meditation, one contemplates the all by contemplating on anything. By meditation as prescribed in this madhu-vidya, on any of the elements, or for that matter on any object, one identifies himself with the whole cosmos which is within oneself. Even in secular matters one's desire will not materialise if the object of desire remains outside one's mind. This meditation on honey gives the knowledge of the interdependence of things in this universe and their vital connection with each other. The Upanishad says that the Supreme Being created every being and entered as their subtle bodies. He pervades and envelops every being. He himself has assumed the various forms in order that his transcendental nature would become known. In so doing, He has not changed his non- dual, homogeneous, infinite, all-blissful nature. This is the mystery of God as well as of His

creation which is non-different from Himself. The human intellect as long as it retains its separate individuality, cannot grasp this truth, the inscrutable and homogenous nature of the creator, the created and the act of creating. The madhu-vidya, the meditation on honey, enables one to disentangle oneself from the samsara which is nothing but the erroneous notion that one is separate from the world and its creator. Ignorance is rooted out. This meditation fulfils the very purpose of the manifestation of the Absolute as this universe which is nothing but to teach us this great Truth. It effects the experience of everything in its totality. It reconciles all seeming contra- dictions and establishes the meditator in his own real nature which is nothing but pure Consciousness.

71. ASVALA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO ASVALA)

The great sage Yajnavalkya of Upanishadic fame is the teacher who imparts this vidya and it is given as an answer to certain questions put by Asvala, the rigveda priest of king Janaka, in the royal assembly. This occurs in the first brahmana of the third chapter of the Brihadaranyaka- upanishad.

The story through which this meditation is imparted is somewhat like this: Once king Janaka performed a great sacrifice in which all great sages and scholars were present under invitation. During the course of the sacrifice which lasted for several days, the king one day went to the assembly of the great scholars and saints and proclaimed: "He who is the greatest brahma-jnanin, (knower of the supreme Absolute) in the assembly, is permitted to take the one thousand best milch cows with gold tied to their horns and feet, which I have confined in the pen." Silence prevailed in the assembly as no one seemed to be confident about his superiority over the others. Surveying the situation quick- ly, sage Yajnavalkya turning to one of his disciples said: "O my young disciple, please go to the pen and lead all the thousand cows to my home, announcing on the way that Yajnavalkya the great brahma-jnanin in this assembly is taking the cows." The disciple carried out his master's orders.

This created a stir in the assembly as many strongly resented the action of Yajnavalkya. Many bit their lips out of anger. The eyes of some turned reddish and tears flowed down. A few could not keep to their seats due to extreme jealousy and their very seats shook under them. The whole assembly was thrown into disorder and confusion. Many openly expressed their objection in accepting Yajnavalkya as the greatest knower of Brahman. Eight among them tested his knowledge of Brahman by putting questions. Yajnavalkya answered all their questions and won a victory over all. These questions and answers are

contained in the third chapter of the Upanishad and they contain a number of vidyas. The first person to question Yajnavalkya was Asvala, one of the priests of the king.

Asvala put eight questions of which the first four related to atimokshah and the second four to sampadah. The two terms atimokshah and sampadah are Vedic and have special connotations. atimokshah here means limited freedom that is attained when one realises the identity of the organs like the organ of speech, etc., with their presiding deities, such as agni, etc., through meditation combined with ritual- istic sacrifices. Identification of individual karmas and other parts of sacrifices with their universal counterparts through meditation based on resemblance leaving off their individual and separate nature, is referred to as sampadah.

All accessories of sacrifice such as priests, fire, oblations, time, results, etc., are perishable. The are swallowed by death. What is the meditation that would free the sacrificer from this death, is the first question of Asvala. Sage Yajnavalkya prescribes a meditation which is to be done combining it with the ritualistic portion of the sacrifice. The sacrificer should meditate that vak, his organ of speech with which he chants the Veda, agni, the fire god who is the presiding deity of the organ of speech and the hotr, the priest who chants the rigveda mantras, as identical with himself. This meditation liberates the sacrificer from death in the form of his limited, natural attachment relating to the body and the elements. Meditation on the hotr priest and the organ of speech in their divine aspect, results in this limited liberation.

What is that meditation by practising which the sacrificer can liberate himself from death in the form of time as day and night? This is the second question. And Yajna- valkya prescribes the meditation on the eye, its presiding deity, the sun-god, and adhvaryu, the yajurveda priest as identical and non-different from the sacrificer. As long as the sacrificer has the feeling that these are different from himself, he will

be under the grip of death in the form of attachment to the body, the karmas and their results.

The third meditation instructed by Yajnavalkya is the one in which the sacrificer identifies himself and considers himself non-different from prana, hiranyagarbha and the udgatr priest who chants the sama-veda. This meditation frees the sacrificer from death in the form of time manifesting as the bright and dark fortnight caused by the movement of the moon, about which was the third question of Asvala, What is the meditation through which the sacrificer attains the heavenly worlds or is released from this mortal world? To this fourth question, Yajnavalkya prescribes the meditation on the identity of the sacrificer with brahma, the priest who supervises the work of other priests, the mind and its presiding deity, the moon. By this meditation, the sacrificer attains the heavenly worlds.

The next meditation which is based on resemblance is on the rig-mantras. They are three in number-the pre- liminary, the sacrificial and the eulogistic hymns. The sacrificer should meditate on the identity of these mantras with the three worlds, the resemblance being that both the mantras and the worlds are three in number. Through this meditation, the sacrificer attains all that is living in the three worlds.

yajur-mantras are chanted when offering oblations in the sacred fire. These oblations are of three kinds, those that make the flames blaze up when they are offered, those that make the flames sink down and those that make great noise when offered. While offering the oblations of the first variety, the sacrificer should meditate that just as these oblations make the fire bright, they are of the very form of the result he seeks, viz., the world of the gods. And as a result of this meditation, he attains the celestial world. Similarly, through meditation on the other two kinds of oblations he wins the world of the manes and this world.

The next meditation is on the visvedevas who are numerous. Each modification of the mind is one deva (god).

These modifications being infinite, infinite are the gods also and infinite are the results of this meditation.

Now comes the last meditation given by Yajnavalkya in answer to the eighth question of Asvala. It is the meditation on the rig-mantras which come under three groups or classes, puroruvakya, yajya and sasya-those chanted before the starting of the sacrifice, those chanted during the performance of the sacrifice and those in praise of the sacrifice. The sacrificer should meditate on these three mantras as identical with prana, apana, and vyana, respectively. Through the meditation on the preliminary hymns he attains the earth, through the sacrificial hymns he attains the sky, and through the eulogistic hymns he attains the heavenly worlds.

Here as in all other vidyas the emphasis is on medita- tion. Rituals performed and mantras chanted without the knowledge of their meaning, significance and import behind them and without combining them with meditation, are also productive of good results but they are transient. The spiritual seekers should not remain satisfied with these impermanent results. They should understand what these riutals mean and why they are enjoined in the scriptures. They should also practise meditations as suggested in this and similar vidyas. The following funny incident that happened in a house shows how far ignorance in our reli- gious and spiritual life, has taken hold of the modern youths.

There was an aged couple in Delhi with their only son who was studying for his M.A. Degree course. The father used to do the daily deva puja in the room intended for the pur- pose, with all the shodaso'pacharas as they are called. This sanskrit word means sixteen items through which the deity is honoured (vide foot-note for the details"). A cat used to come and trouble him during the puja,

evidently to get something to eat used to be kept for naivedya. To avoid its trouble he used to tie it to the nearest pillar whenever it appeared during the puja. The son was observing this and in his ignorance of what puja is, he took it to be a necessary part of the worship. One day in the absence of the father he had to do the puja, for it is the custom not to miss the daily deva puja on any account. They have to finish the puja before taking their lunch. It so happened that on that particular day, the cat did not make its appearance. The boy therefore waited for the cat's coming, for his under- standing was that he could start the worship only after tying the cat to that particular pillar. He was in a hurry, for after finishing the puja alone he could take his lunch and go to the college. He was fretting and fuming. His mother who happened to go to the puja room, was surprised that the puja had not even started. She enquired why he was not performing the puja. And the boy said: "Mother, the cat has not come so far, how can I start the puja with- out tying the cat to the pillar? I have seen father doing this everyday. I am waiting for the cat to come." The mother had a hearty laugh and she then explained to the son that the father used to tie the cat only to avoid its trouble and that it was not a part of the puja at all. The boy felt ashamed of his ignorance about such a simple matter. He thereafter took interest in puja and worship, understood their significance and meaning, cultivated devotion and knowledge and led the life divine.

72. USHASTA KAHOLA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO USHASTA AND KAHOLA)

This meditation occurs in the muni-kanda of the Brihad- aranyaka-upanishad (III-4 and 5). The preceptor of this vidya is Sage Yajnavalkya who imparts it to Ushasta and Kahola, two among the learned men in the court of king Janaka. The vidya starts with the reply to the question put by Ushasta. The question was: "O Yajnavalkya, please explain to me Brahman that is immediate and direct, the Self within all (sakshad-aparokshad-brahma)." When Yajna- valkya finished his reply that Brahman is That which exists independent of the body-mind complex, Kahola stood up and put the same question again. This is not a mere use- less repetition, but intended to get some additional knowledge about the Reality which has not been given in the reply to Ushasta, viz., the means of realisation of Brahman thro- ugh renunciation.

Brahman should be meditated as one's own Self which is within all, which breathes through the prana, which moves downwards through apana, which pervades the whole body through vyana, which causes departure of life through udana. It is that which transcends hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, decay and death. It is the Witness of vision, and therefore, cannot be seen as one sees external objects. Being the Hearer of hearing, one cannot hear It. Similarly, It being the Thinker of thought, one cannot think about It. It cannot also be known as It is the Knower of know- ledge. It is the only permanent, unchanging, imperish- able Reality. All that is other to It is evanescent, ever changing and perishable.

It is 'immediately' present and 'directly' perceptible. 'Immediate' means not mediate, without the mediacy of the organs and the mind. It is to be perceived 'directly', not like perceiving objects outside through the sense organs and the mind. Being the Self, It is the Subject, not the gram- matical subject posited against an object or a predicate, but the spiritual Subject which cannot be pointed out like

an object, say a cow for example. By holding the two horns of cow, one can show it to another and say 'this is a cow'. The Self cannot be shown like that for It will never become an object. So, It is said to be immediate and direct, the two words having a special spiritual connotation. The ques- tion of Ushasta contained in mantra III-4-ii to give a definite and objective description of the Self, is impertinent and is inadmissible in discussions about the Absolute. Acharya Sankara explains the two terms 'immediate' and 'direct' as avyavahitam-not separated by anything or not obstruct- ed in any manner, and agaunam-not secondary, not fig- urative. That 'entity' which satisfies these two conditions is given the appellations 'Brahman' with reference to the universe and 'the Atman' with reference to the individual beings. It is the innermost essence, but it is not inner to anything in the usual sense of the term. It is the most universal and all-pervasive and yet not external. It is in short the non-dual Essence in all,

The Svetasvatara-upanishad in verse 11 of chapter VI gives almost a similar meditation. It says: "God is one only. He is hidden in all beings. He is all-pervasive and is the innermost Self of all. He presides over all happenings and in Him reside all beings. He is the Witness and He is the pure Consciousness alone, free of all attributes of prak- riti viz., the three gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas".

He who meditates thus, as given in this vidya, transcends hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, decay and death. All desires leave him. Freed of desire for progeny and wealth in this world while alive and for higher worlds after death, he leads the life of a renunciate. He possesses all knowledge (pandityam). (pandityam). Transcending all knowledge he becomes childlike (balyam). Transcending the childlike nature also, he becomes a muni, one who is in supreme Silence. The word balyam in mantra III-5-i is interpreted as childlike and also as 'with strength that comes from the Atman'. atmana vindate viryam-

one gets spiritual strength through the Atman, says the Kena-upanishad mantra II-4.

He lives in whatever manner he likes. This does not mean any reckless behaviour on his part. Scriptural injunctions and prohibitions do not bind him. He is completely free as he is the Self of all.

That rare person who attains success in this meditation is really a blessed one. None can describe his nature fully. People who try to describe a Sage can be broadly brought under three groups. Many describe his body and its activities. They speak a lot about his parents, his birth, childhood, his school education and so on. Some others describe the sage's charitable nature, his love towards others, his instruction to his disciples, his equal vision, etc. Only very few, may be one in a million, describe the sage rightly. through statements like 'I am He' and 'He is I'. Those who have themselves realised the Truth alone can boldly assert their identity with the Sage, because they have directly experienced the truth of the Vedic declarations neti, ineti-not this, not this, and sarvam khalvidam brahma—all this is verily non-dual Consciousness, pure and infinite. That the first two groups of people who think that they are giving beautiful, long and eloquent descriptions of the sage, are far from right, needs no special mention.

According to sage Vasishtha, there are two types of munis, sages who observe inauna, silence—the rigid ascetic and the liberated sage. The former forcibly restrains his senses and engages himself in Yogic activities with fanaticism. The latter knows the Truth and yet be haves as an ordinary person. Silence is of five kinds: i) silence of speech, ii) silence of sense organs, iii) violent restraint, iv) silence of the mind, and v) the silence of deep sleep during the waking state (sushupti manua). It is the last that is really conducive to liberation. In it the prana; is neither restrained nor promoted, the senses are neither fed nor starved, the perception of diversity is neither expresed nor suppressed, and the mind is neither mind nor non-mind, There is

no division, and hence, no effort what soever in transcending it. One who is established in It may or may not meditate. He has the knowledge of what is as it is. In that state, there is neither 'I' nor another, neither mind nor anything projected by the mind and one knows that 'I' is but an idea and there is nothing other to Consciousness.

73. UDDALAKA-ARUNI-VIDYA

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO UDDALAKA-ARUNI)

This vidya is named after Uddalaka, the son of Aruna, who received it from sage Yajnavalkya. It occurs in section III-7 of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad. The section is well- known as the antaryami-brahmana. The vidya is introduced through a story which runs as follows: Uddalaka was the seventh among the several scholars in the assembly of king Janaka who had philosophical disputations with sage Yajnavalkya. The first six viz., Asvala, Arthabhaga, Bhujyu, Ushasta, Kahola and Gargi, having accepted their defeat in argumentation with sage Yajnavalkya, resumed their seats. Then stood up Uddalaka to question Yajna- valkya. He said: "O Yajnavalkya, please listen to me. We once lived in the house of our teacher Patanchala Kapya studying the sacred scriptures. Our teacher's wife was possessed by a gandharva (celestial musician) named Kaban- dha who had the good intention of imparting a vidya to our teacher. With this purpose in mind the gandharva put two questions: i) What is that string (sutra) by which all beings are held together here and hereafter?, and ii) Who is the internal ruler (antaryamin) who controls this and the next life and all beings from within? The gandharva also said that he who knew the sutra and the antaryamin knew Brah- man, the worlds, the gods, the Vedas and everything. Our teacher pleaded ignorance, and thereupon, the gandharva taught him all about the sutra and the antaryamin. I having heard him know about them. Do you know them, O Yajnavalkya?". Yajnavalkya said that he knew both the sutra and the antaryamin. Uddalaka insisting for a detailed description of the sutra and antaryamin, Yajnavalkya, the wise sage, imparted this vidya to him in that royal court of king Janaka.

The sutra (string or thread) by which all beings and all worlds are strung together, as it were, refers to the subtle immanent Principle, which pervades each and every object from the greatest to the smallest, from the grossest to the subtlest. It is the sutra which is

referred to in the Srimad-bhagavadgita wherein Lord Krishna says: "In Me all is woven as clusters of gems on a string" (VII-7). It is in the String of the supreme Vital Force that the pearls of the worlds are strung, as it were. There is however one difference in this cosmic string holding together all the worlds and the ordinary string holding together many pearls or flowers. While in the latter the string and the pearls are different and the string passes only through a part of each pearl, in the former, it is the very same string in which the worlds are strung, as it were, that has assumed the forms of the worlds also. It is that Essence which constitutes the worlds here and hereafter. It is the cosmic prana which holds together the atoms and molecules in each object and keeps the planets and other heavenly bodies in their proper position and makes them move in their fixed orbits. It is this very same cosmic prana that manifests itself in the forms of gravitational pull in the planets, the adhesive force in the molecules, the centripetal and centrifugal forces in all beings, the potential and kinetic energy in the atoms, the simple forms of all attraction and repulsion-in short as all forms of energy and matter of the scientists. It is due to this prana that beings live and appear as integral wholes with all their limbs kept together. When the living beings die, when this vital force leaves them, the limbs loosen themselves, even as the pearls or flowers get scattered when the string that connects them and makes them into a garland, snaps. This is the antaryamin, the innermost and immanent principle which controls everything. This Lord of all beings, sentient and insentient, moving and stationary, dwells in or inhabits the earth, but still it is within the earth, whom the earth cannot perceive as a distinct entity and who controls the earth remaining seated in the heart of the earth. This is your own Self as also mine and that of all beings. Thus said Yajnavalkya to Uddalaka.

The mystery about this Self is that everything is perceived because of It, but It cannot be perceived by anyone. Everything moves because of It, but It does not move like an object or person. Similarly, It dwells in

the water and other elements, and also in the sky, heaven, sun, in all the directions and heavenly deities. It dwells in all beings and in all their organs such as the organ of speech, eye, ear, skin, mouth, mind, intellect and the rest. The divine, the universal and the individual aspects, in other words, the transcendental, the objective and the subjective aspects are, as it were, the body of this Principle referred to by various epithets such as sutra, antaryamin, hiranyagarbha, brahma, etc.

This is sometimes compared to the seed which becomes a big tree. The dry seed stands for Brahman the soaked and swelled up seed before germination stands for isvara, the small sprout to hiranyagarbha and the grown up tree to virat. In the analogy of the painted canvas that is given in some scriptures, the pure white canvas stands for the transcendental aspect of Brahman, the canvas covered by white starch to isvara, the same with light pencil sketch of the sceneries to hiranyagarbha and the painted canvas with the complete scenery in variegated colours to virat. These analogies are pointers to help the aspirant in his meditation.

It is hiranyagarbha who is referred to as both the sutra and the antaryamin. It is He alone who in His three aspects of adhidaiva, adhibhuta and adhyatma appears as the celestials, the universe and the individual. These are not three separate groups, but are three aspects, as it were, of the one Reality. The word 'aspects' is also used in a special, philosophical sense, even as words like 'internal' and 'external' are used with reference to this cosmic Principle in whom there is neither internality nor externality. The result of this meditation is experience of oneness with the earth and other elements, their presiding deities such as agni, vayu, varuna, indra and others, the Vedas, the virat, the self which appears as the doer and experiencer, in short, everything.

Towards the close of this antaryami-brahmana, we get a description of the supreme Being in the following words: "He is never seen but is

the Witness, He is never heard but is the Hearer, He is never thought of but is the There is Thinker, He is never known but is the Knower. There is no other witness but Him, no other hearer but Him, no other thinker but Him, no other knower but Him. He is the internal Ruler, your own immortal Atman. Everything else except Him is mortal, perishable."

Is there anything else but Him? Yes and no. Yes, because we see a world before us including our body and mind as though separate from Him. No, because this world is unreal, non-existent, an appearance like the mirage. Though mirage-water may appear like an ocean with waves, not a grain of sand is wetted by it, for there is no real water. So is the case with this appearance of the world which we see external to and separate from oneself. To him who has known the Truth, there is nothing besides Him, the Atman-Brahman. Does he not see the world? Does he not see his own body? He may see or may not see. From the point of view of others who see his body, he may be seeing the world. But to him there is nothing besides the one non-dual Being.

A doubt may arise in the mind of the aspirant whether the world would disappear when he gets the direct experience of the Truth, the Absolute. If the world which necessarily includes his individual personality, is to disappear, then to whom is this 'direct experience' and who is to enjoy the bliss of jivanmukti? And if the world does not disappear, then duality and the resulting suffering would continue and does not all spiritual sadhana become fruitless? To clear this doubt, we once again quote the Mandukya-karika which says: prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samsayah; mayamatram-idam dvaitam-advaitam paramarthatah (1-17). Such a doubt can arise only when one is ignorant and not when one realises the Truth through direct experience. The question of disappearance of the world phenomena or its continuance can arise only if the world had any existence at all. It is an appearance like the snake in the rope. In this oft-quoted example, we must clearly understand that even when one thinks that

he is seeing a snake, what he is seeing is really a rope and there is no snake at all. And hence the question of disappearance of the snake or its continued appearance after seeing the rope, cannot arise. Even so is the disappearance or otherwise of the world after the direct experience of the Truth. The doubt is therefore not reason- able and should not be allowed to rise and disturb the mind. The illusion of duality and difference that is perceived is really the non-dual blissful Absolute alone.

74. AKSHARA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON THE ABSOLUTE)

We get this vidya in sections 6 and 8 of chapter III of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad. The instructions on the meditation are given in the form of questions and answers be- tween two great personages. The questioner is a lady saint and sage by name Gargi and the answerer is sage Yajna- valkya. (The story in which the vidya is couched is given in the asvala-vidya.)

The Sanskrit term akshara here in this context means the Imperishable, the Immutable, The Absolute.

The meditation here is to be practised by merging the effect in its immediate cause, through knowledge. An effect is completely pervaded by its cause. The gross is pervaded by the subtle. The law of cause and effect is applicable in this relative phenomenal universe of space and time, but does not hold good in the Absolute. Gargi being an expert logician, starts her questions based on logic. She says that every effect should have a cause. The element earth has, therefore, its cause in the element water. And water is stated to be the support for earth. Because in the order of creation, it is said that the subtle element 'earth' is born out of the subtle element 'water'. Water which is the cause pervades the earth which is the effect, like warp and woof in a cloth. Based on this logic that every effect is pervaded by its cause, Gargi puts the question: "by what is water pervaded like warp and woof in a cloth?" The question in slightly different words would be: what is the cause for water, or what is that principle which acts as the cause and remains as the support for the water? Yajnavalkya answers that it is vayu, the principle of air which is subtler than the principle of water. She continues her questions taking the consciousness to still subtler realms. Air in its turn is pervaded by its cause which is akasa, ether. From ether, the questions and answers take us to the world of gandharvas, the world of the sun and the world of the moon. Here this

moon is not the one we see in the sky, but it is said to be the original condition of the planetary substance from which all these planets have come out. Taking the conscious- ness still higher, or we may say to deeper levels, this moon is said to be pervaded by the world of the stars which world is still subtler. Next in the order of subtlety is the world of gods, then the world of indra, the king of all the gods. Still subtler than it is the world of prajapati or the virat which pervades the world of indra, as warp and woof in a cloth. On Gargi pushing her question as to the cause of virat, Yajnavalkya says that virat is pervaded by hiranyagarbha, the subtlest of all, the Cosmic vital force, mind and intelligence. These worlds where all objects are comparatively gross, are fit abodes for the enjoy- ment of beings. hiranyagarbha is the first cause, all the others being his effects. In meditation, one should through knowledge merge everything starting from earth and end- ing with the world of virat, in hiranyagarbha who is also known as saguna-brahman or sabala-brahman. Through this meditation, one identifies oneself with this cosmic hiranyagarbha. This is said to be krama-mukti or gradual libration. Here all particularity ceases. In that Supreme universality, the meditator identifies himself with the whole universe. He is now a God-man.

Gargi, following the same trend of logical question- ing, asks Yajnavalkya, the cause of hiranyagarbha also. "By what, is the world of hiranyagarbha pervaded?"-is her next question. As the whole universe both gross and subtle, both cause and effect, all that is perceptible and knowable has merged in that highest universal conscious- ness of hiranyagarbha, her present question cannot arise logically. This fact is pointed out by Yajnavalkya who says that no logical answer can be given to her question. With this ends section 6 of chapter III of the Upanishad dealing with this meditation.

The subject is continued in section 8 of the same chapter. Gargi now leaves off all her logic and puts two questions taking her stand on the

scriptures. The reply given by Yajnavalkya gives the meditation on the un- conditioned Brahman.

The first question is: "hiranyagarbha, also called sutra-atman because of His all-pervasiveness, is both the upper and lower halves of the cosmic shell and which is also between the two halves, which the wise say on the authority of the scriptures, was in the past, is in the present and will be in the future. By what is this hiranya- garbha pervaded?" Yajnavalkya says that It is pervaded by akasa, the unmanifested Ether. The manifested universe of hiranyagarbha exists in the unmanifested Ether of isvara, like earth in water, in the past, present and future-in its origin, continuance and dissolution.

Meditation in the usual sense of the term as a function of the mind ceases when one's consciousness reaches the level of hiranyagarbha. The Upanishad prescribes merging of hiranyagarbha-consciousness into isvara-consciousness, the 'manifested whole' into the 'unmanifested whole'. The individual intellect of man having already merged in the universal intelligence of hiranyagarbha, there is no more the act of meditating. Then what happens? The meditator moves on as it were to something that is beyond even universality or cosmic consciousness. The mind and intellect cannot hold it. It is a condition indescribable, but experienced by the meditator through intuition, if at all we can use that term which does not fully express it. Those who are in this condition of isvara-consciousness, some- times if they are of emotional nature, dance in ecstasy. Their The ignorant may think they are crazy. mind cannot contain the infinite which they are experiencing and hence their dance, the songs, the exclamations and similar external bodily expressions. The Taittiriya-upani- shad attempts to give a description of what they experience when it, in the fifth mantra of the 10th section in bhrigu- valli, says: O! O! O! I am the food, I am the food, I am the food; I am the eater of food, I am the eater of food, I am the eater of food; I am the unifier, I am the unifier, I am the first born (hiranyagarbha) of this world, I as virat am earlier

than the gods, I am the navel of immortality, he who offers to those who beg for food, me thus as food, protects me intact as I am. I, food as I am, eat him up who eats food without offering; I engulf the entire universe, our effulgence is like that of the sun." This is only an attempt of the Upanishad to give expression, through human language of that super-ecstatic experience which cannot even be thought of by the mind. No one who has the feeling of individuality can express in words or conceive in his mind, what the experience of isvara-consciousness is.

Now comes the second question of Gargi, who was a knower of the supreme Brahman even as Yajnavalkya was. And it is with a view to instruct through her in that royal assembly of king Janaka, them the whole aspirant-world, that she put the questions and Yajnavalkya answered them. The second question is: By what is the Unmanifested Ether, isvara, pervaded?

Sri Acharya Sankara commenting on this question of Gargi states that this second question, according to the science of logic, is unanswerable for two reasons. The first one is that the unmanifested Ether, isvara, itself being beyond space and time, is difficult to explain. Much more so is the Immutable, the Unconditioned Brahman, the cause of isvara, by which isvara is pervaded, and hence It cannot certainly be explained through words. The question is a transcendental one (atiprasna). No ordinary man, how- ever intelligent he may be, should and could answer this question, for then he would be laying himself open to the charge of what is called apratipatti which means non- comprehension of the subject matter. If he, on the other hand, goes against this tradition and tries to answer it, he would be guilty of vipratipatti, contradiction, an- other logical defect which everyone should avoid. It is attempting to explain what cannot be explained logically. This is the second reason why the question is considered unanswerable.

The great Sage Yajnavalkya who is omniscient, very tactfully tackles Gargi's question and answers not directly but through the words of Knowers of Brahman (brahmanah). He answers the question and frees himself from the defect of apratipatti and he does not answer himself, and there- fore, frees himself from the second defect of vipratipatti.

The reply given by Yajnavalkya relates to the supreme Brahman who transcends isvara also. He gives to that nameless 'Being' the name akshara, the Imperishable, the Absolute to enable explanation about It which is beyond all explanation. This famous mantra given for meditation, is perhaps one among the few such mantras depicting the Absolute, occurring in the Upanishads. It runs as follows: O Gargi, the Knowers of Brahman say, the Immutable (Brahman) is that which pervades isvara, the Unmanifested Ether. It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long. It is neither red colour nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness. Neither is It the air or the ether. It is un-attached. It is neither odour nor taste. It is without eyes, ears, the organ of speech and mind. It is non-luminous. It is without prana and mouth. It is not a measure. It is without interior and exterior. It does not eat anything i.e., It is not the subject. It is not eaten by anything i.e., It is not an object (III-8-viii).

In short, every attribute limited or unlimited, finite or infinite, is denied in that supreme Being. Even in isvara- consciousness everything is denied, but the difference is that there everything remains in an unmanifested seed form, to manifest itself in the next lower levels of hiranyagarbha and virat, as the universe. But here, in Brahman, there is not even the unmanifested seed form of the universe. The denial of attributes in Brahman is quite different from the denial of attributes in an object like a pot or a cloth. In all denials in this phenomenal world, there is something which remains undenied in the form of absence of the thing (abhava). Thus the denial is not complete. Whereas in Brahman, it is complete denial of everything that is perceivable and non-perceivable, everything that is knowable

and unknowable, the presence and also the absence of the world. As the Kenopanishad puts it in the aphoristic state- ment, 'It is different from the known (hiranyagarbha) and beyond the unknown (isvara)' (1-4). How can the limited individual human mind conceive it? Certainly it cannot. Whatever it conceives is not that. To quote the Kenopanishad again, It is that which man does not think through the mind, It is that by which, they say, the mind thinks or the mind is encompassed,- know that to be Brahman and not what people worship here as an object (1-6). The fact is that It being the Infinite, the Whole (purna), pervades the mind and its infinite number of modifications, through and through, that they lose their names and forms and reveal their real nature as Brahman. sarvam khalvidam brahma-All this is Brahman. This is the realisation that the meditator attains when he transcends the isvara- consciousness also. So, the complete negation in Brahman comes to be identical with complete affirmation. It is only logical, for Brahman knows no difference or distinction or separation, nor their opposites, non-difference, non-distinction or non-separation. Brahman is beyond duality and non-duality, many-ness and one-ness.

One who engages himself in mere intellectual argu- mentation, disregarding the scriptural guidance, may land oneself in nihilism, a great danger which every sincere sadhaka should try to avoid. Brahman cannot be a void or complete non-existence, because It has necessarily to per- vade and exist as the innermost essence, the Atman of that void or non-existence also. This is simple logic. Does non-existence exist or not? The answer can only be either the one or the other. If the answer is 'it exists', then non-existence be- comes existence and there is therefore no non-existence. On the other hand, if the answer is 'it does not exist', that means that non-existence does not have existence which is the same as affirming existence. Brahman is Existence- Absolute, and therefore, Consciousness-Absolute, for Existence cannot exist without Consciousness and Consciousness

cannot be without Existence. And Bliss cannot but be where there is Existence-Consciousness-Absolute, for the three words in their Absolute nature, do not mean three separate entities, but refer to the one non-dual, infinite Brahman.

The Upanishad, anticipating the chance of the sadhakas of purely argumentative nature, coming to the wrong con- clusion of Brahman being a complete void, adduces infer- ential evidence to help meditation, in favour of Its exist- ence. It says that one should meditate on Brahman as that by whose command the whole universe has come into exist- ence and is functioning as it does and finally dissolves at the time of dissolution. This command of Brahman is not through words or gesture or anything like that, but by Its very presence or existence. Its command, for that matter, Its desire, will, creation and Its effect in the form of this universe, is Its Being itself. Because of the mighty rule of this great Being, planets like the sun and moon move in their orbits, heaven and earth are held in their positions, space and time exist as such, rivers flow and mountains stand motionless, the ocean keeps to its limits, men worship God, give charity and offer oblations to the manes, the lightning flashes, the eye winks, living beings breathe-in short whatever happens and does not happen is because of this Being.

As long as one does not realise this great Being, one suffers transmigration. The knowledge of this Being which dawns through meditation, puts a stop to transmigration. This Immutable should be meditated as the witness of every- thing seen, but that which is never seen, as the hearer who cannot be heard, as the thinker who cannot be thought of or conceived of as an object or idea in the mind, and as the knower who cannot be known.

The result of this meditation is either sadyo-mukti, immediate liberation here and now, or krama-mukti, gradual liberation, depending upon the nature of meditation. Is there a difference between sadyo-mukti and krama-mukti? Is there again any difference

between transcendental and the immanent, or between the nirguna and saguna? Can difference exist in Liberation which is synonymous with the non-dual Brahman? It is true that no difference of any kind can exist in the Absolute. Yet, scriptures do speak of two kinds of liberation, the immediate and the gradual. This subject is taken up for discussion in the Brahma Sutras (IV-4-v to vii) and the author of the sutras gives his verdict that even though it is admitted that the Atman-Brah- man manifests itself in its own real nature of pure, un-conditioned Consciousness, free of all attributes, still its possession of form and the divine majesty of the conditioned Brahman that is referred to in the Upanishads, is not denied from the empirical point of view, and hence, there is no contradiction between the two, the unconditioned and the conditioned Brahman, or the gradual and immediate Liberation, or the Transcendental and the Immanent.

In chapter VII on tripti-dipa in "Panchadasi", Swami Vidyaranya describes the superb experience of a Knower of Brahman in verses 291-297:

291. krita-krityataya triptah prapta-prapyataya punah,

tripyannevam sva-manasa manyate'sau nirantaram.

292. dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham nityam svatmanam-anjasa vedmi,

dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham brahmanando vibhati me spashtam

293. dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham duhkham samsarikam na vikshe᳭dya,

dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham svasya'jnanam palayitam kvapi

294. dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham kartavyam me na vidyate kimchit,

dhayo'ham dhanyo'ham dhanyo dhanyah punah punar- sampannam.

295. dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham tripter-me ko'pama bhavel- loke,

dhanyo'ham dhanyo'ham dhanyo dhanyah, punah punar-dhanyah.

296. aho punyam aho punyam phalitam phalitam dridham, asya punyasya sampatter-aho vayam-aho vayam.

297. aho sastram aho sastram aho gurur-aho guruh,

aho jnanam aho jnanam aho sukham aho sukham.

-"Satisfied that he has done all that is to be done, and again satisfied that he has attained all that has to be attained, he ever experiences as follows: Blessed am I, blessed am I, I completely realise myself. Blessed am I, blessed am I, the Bliss of Brahman clearly manifests itself to me. Blessed am I, blessed am I, I do not perceive the pain of samsara. Blessed am I, blessed am I, my ignorance has fled, I know not where. Blessed am I, blessed am I, there is nothing for me to do. Blessed am I, blessed am I, every- thing that is worth attaining has been attained. Blessed am I, blessed am I, what can be in this world equal to my satisfaction! Blessed am I, blessed am I, blessed, blessed, again and again blessed! Ah! my meritorious deeds! Ah! my meritorious deeds! They have certainly borne their fruits. Ah! how wonderful are we! Ah! how wonderful are we! Ah! the wonderful Revelation! Ah! the wonderful scriptures! Ah! the most compassionate Guru! Ah! the Guru the ocean of mercy! Ah! the Knowledge Supreme! Ah! the Supreme Bliss! Ah! the Ocean of Bliss!

75. SAKALYA-VIDYA-1

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO SAKALYA-1)

The Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, chapter III, section 9, mantras x to xvii gives this highly esoteric and mystical meditation. It is given in the form of questions and answers between one Sakalya, son of Sakala, also known by the name of Vidagdha who questions, and Sage Yajnavalkya who answers them. The meditation is on subtle forces which work inside man. The objects for meditation in this vidya are given in an ascending order of subtlity. The mantras i to ix just preceding, explain that it is the one god, hiranyagarbha called tyat, "That', that manifests him- self as one, the prana; as one and half, the cosmic air; as two, matter and energy; as three, the worlds of earth and fire, the sky and air, and the heaven and the sun; as six, fire, earth, air, sky, sun and heaven; as thirty three, the eight vasus, the eleven rudras, the twelve adityas, indra and prajapati; as three hunderd and three, and three thous- and and three, and finally, as the infinite number of gods. Each being is pervaded by the one God and with reference to the infinite number of beings that exist, the gods are also said to be infinite in number. The purpose of this vidya is, as in the case of other vidyas, to remove the wrong and false notion of distinction between the individual and the universal. In this vidya, one and the same prana has been described as eight different gods and each god as having three divisions, the abode (general form), the being (special manifestation), and the deity (cause).

The meditation starts with the physical body and passes on to more subtle objects such as desire, the eye, ether, darkness, reflection, water and the seed. One should start one's meditation on the deity who has the earth as his body, who sees through fire, whose light is the mind and who is the ultimate resort of all and who is amritam, the im- mortal essence due to which it has its very existence. The deity is the body itself. It is constituted of earthly elements which cannot see without fire which is the sun, whose guiding light is the mind. Its

essence is the chyle, the essence of the food that is eaten. This physical body should be meditated as identical with the Supreme deity, the Self. To such a meditator, the body becomes the best friend and serves him in all possible manner. It is when through ignorance, the feeling of separateness prevails, the body becomes the source of all pain and misery. Through this meditation the undivine body becomes divine.

The next step in this vidya is to shift the meditation from the body to the subtler principle kama, desire. It is prana that manifests itself from the grossest principle, the earth, up to the most subtle akasa. It is the abode of desire. The intellect which is also a manifestation of prana, is the instrument of desire. The term kama, though general- ly used in a limited sense to mean the sexual urge, has a wider meaning in this meditation. It is one of the four human aims, the other three being dharma, artha and moksha-righteousness or the cosmic law, wealth in all its forms and final liberation. artha and kama if based on dharma are no more obstacles to liberation, but are help to the aspirant to attain the ultimate Goal of moksha. When kama is identified with prana, intellect, mind, one's own essence and woman who is to be meditated as the very being identified with lust, it becomes divine.

The meditator should now meditate on the eye as identical with forms and colour seen by the eye, the mind through which it sees and the being in the sun, its presiding deity. The eye then becomes divine.

A similar meditation is prescribed on the being whose abode is ether, whose instrument of perception is the ear, whose light is the mind and whose deity is the directions (dik-devata).

Subtler still is the next meditation on darkness whose deity is death. One should know that all our perceptions in the present state of ignorance of the truth, are mere shadows, mere names and forms, a mere external appearance, as in dream. Just as all our perceptions in dream are in darkness, so also in the waking state whatever we

perceive through the senses is darkness whose presiding deity is death, hiranyagarbha. Through this meditation all our undivine sense perceptions become divine.

Still more subtle is the meditation on reflection, the adarsa-purusha, the person seen in the mirror. The reflection in the mirror is quite reverse to the original object. When the person before the mirror stands facing east, the reflection is seen to face the opposite direction, viz., west. The right side of the person is seen as the left side in the reflection. Even so is our perception of the world. We see the opposite of what really is. When the Reality is one, eternal, infinite, unlimited, all-blissful, we see the world as many, temporal, finite, limited and full of pain and misery. This meditation helps to transcend the erroneous perception.

The next step is meditation on the deity of varuna, the presiding deity of water, as the abode of water and which is the cause of life in the body.

The eighth and the last meditation is on the deity who is the seed of man which pervades the whole body being the essence of all the limbs of the body. The deity here is prajapati identified with the father. These are, as already stated in the beginning, full of esoteric meaning, the significance of which the sense-ridden mind of the modern man cannot grasp easily, unless he sincerely and seriously takes up the purification of his inner personality through self- control. This includes the introversion of the senses and the mind. Then he should approach his spiritual master, practise sravana (hearing the Truth from the Master), manana (reflection over what is heard and coming to the firm conviction about the Truth) and nididhyasana (deep meditation on the Truth).

We are in the city of benightedness, as it were. The world we live in is all darkness, though we boast ourselves in our utter ignorance, that we are in a modern, scientific, atomic age. Once a Guru with his young

disciple was wandering from place to place. One evening, they reached a city. They stopped there and sat under a tree just at the outskirts of the city. The disciple went to get some provisions to cook their meagre supper. To his surprise he found that in that city, in all shops, all articles cost only twenty-five paise. Whatever you take, whatever be the nature of the article, whatever be the quality, the shop- keepers demanded only twenty-five paise per kilo-gram. He purchased a large quantity of wheat flour, ghee, sugar, etc., and returned to the master with a heavy head-load of provisions. He was jumping with joy. The guru enquired what the matter was for his unusual joy. Then he explained how everything in that place could be got for a mere twenty-five paise and that he had purchased a large quantity of all they required. He also suggested that they could stay in that city permanently and need not wander here and there anymore. The guru thought for a second and said: "O my dear young man, we should not remain in this city even for this night, we should move immediately. Leave all your provisions and let us go to the next village to spend the night." The disciple could not understand his master and in his desire to enjoy life at the least cost, he entreated the master that they might live in that city itself at least for a few months if not permanently. The master did not relent, but rose up and started his journey. All the entreaties of the disciple were of no use. Seeing the disciple unwilling to leave the city, the master said, "O my disciple, you seem to be attached to this city. But I warn you that there is something seriously wrong here. You may remain here if you choose. I am anyhow leaving. I once again warn you, beware." The master left the city. The disciple remained for a few months enjoying all sense pleasures got so cheap. He became healthy and hefty and gained much weight in a short time.

One day there was heavy rain and a compound wall in a house built of mud collapsed causing serious injury to a passerby. He filed a complaint to the king. The king called for the owner of the house and

instituted an enquiry. The owner said that it was true that his compound wall fell on the complainant and he was injured. The king at once pronounced his judgment to hang him immediately. The owner of the house pleaded not guilty on the ground that though he was the owner, the wall was built by a mason who was responsible for the incident. Hearing this, the king thought that what the owner of the house said was reasonable and the really guilty man must be, the mason and not the owner who was therefore acquitted. The mason was called for and when he admitted that it was he who built the wall, the king found him guilty and once again pronounced his 'wise' judgment to hang him immediately. Now the intelligent mason also pleaded not guilty and said that though it was true that he built the wall, he was not responsible for its collapse and it was his assistant who poured excess water in the mud. Seeing reason in the statement of the mason, the king let him go and ordered the assistant to be brought at once. The assistant who admitted the defect in the mud which he prepared, it being a little too watery, was ordered to be hanged. This assistant then explained to the king that he was not responsible for the defective mud. He said: "O wise king, when I was mixing the mud, I heard a beautiful song. I looked in the direction from which the sound came. Then I found that a beautiful dancing girl in the balcony of the neighbouring house was singing. I am a lover of music and my whole attention was, therefore, drawn to- wards that girl and her music. So some additional water happened to fall into the mud. Under these circumstances, I plead not guilty." The king said, "Yes, you are quite right, you are free. You can go. Call that dancing girl." The dancing girl was brought and after the usual enquiry she was ordered to be hanged. She had no excuse to give. She was taken to the execution hall and the noose was lowered. The girl's neck was too thin and the executioner found that the noose was too large for her neck. The matter was reported to the king who after a moment's reflection, came to the 'wise' decision that the girl should be let off and he whose neck was of the same size of the noose, should be brought and

hanged. A wise judgment of the wisest king! The king's officers went around the city to find out that man whose neck was of the same size of the noose. After a long search they pitched upon our disciple who was enjoying life in that wonderful city. He was thin and lean when he came, but had grown fat and stout with the rich and nutritious food which he got, all for twenty-five paise. He was taken to the gallows and inspite of all his protests, the noose was lowered and was placed around his neck, because it was the command of the 'wise' king of that benighted city. At that moment, the sound 'stop', 'stop' was heard. A monk was running towards the gallows, pushing aside the people on the way. He stood before the executioner and said: "Please leave off this man and hang me in his place." All the people were astonished. A man and that too, a monk wanting to be hanged! A strange thing indeed! They asked him the reason for his strange behaviour. He said that the matter was very secret and because they insisted, he would reveal it. He said: "I am a monk as you know and a yogin with the knowledge of the future. I know that he who is hanged on this day, at this time, would be born as the king of this city. Please there- fore, make haste. Before the lapse of the auspicious time which lasts only half an hour more, please hang me, so that I may become the king of this wonderful city. Please make haste and do not delay." The matter was reported to the ruling king who at once ran to the place of execution and said in a loud voice: "I, the king of this city, will not allow anyone else to become the next king. I alone must continue to be the king. Therefore, O executioner, please hang me immediately at this auspicious moment." It was the king's commandment and it had to be carried out. A king to be hanged on his own orders! Such a thing has not been heard of before. There was confusion and pandemonium. The monk who was none other than the guru caught hold of his disciple's hand and dragging him dis-appeared from the scene. This whole story is summed up in the oft-quoted saying "andheri nagari chaupat raja, sava ser bhaji sava ser khaja".

This world is filled with the darkness of ignorance where anything can happen anytime to anyone. The man who immersed in pleasures obtains sense objects very cheap in this world. Such a man who desists from the clarion call of the guru and the scriptures, has always the noose of death hanging over his head to fall at any moment and strangle him. Only those who follow the scriptural instructions and have the good fortune to have the directions of a spiritual master, can practise meditation with success and transcend all worldliness resulting in supreme peace, the peace that transcends the mind and intellect.

76. SAKALYA-VIDYA-2

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO SAKALYA-2)

Another meditation imparted by sage Yajnavalkya to Sakalya the contained in the ninth section of the third chapter of Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, deals with prana in its five manifestations, divided according to the directions, east, south, west, north and above (vide mantras xx to xxiv).

The eastern direction has to be identified with the sun which is its cause. The sun should be meditated as abiding in the eye which in its turn, abides in colour or form, and colour or form abides on the intellect and mind. Each subsequent one in the above five entities is subtler than its preceding one. This meditation results in the identification of all the five as one entity.

The next meditation is on the identity of the southern direction with its deity which is yama, also called dharma, the god of justice and self-sacrifice, reward, faith and the heart.

The third part of this vidya is meditation on the west- ern direction, with varuna, its presiding deity, the subtle element water, semen and the heart, all as identical.

The fourth division is meditation on the identity of the northern direction, with its presiding deity of moon, soma juice, initiation, truth and the heart.

The fifth and the last part of the meditation is on the fixed direction, the zenith which is the direction over- head, with its presiding deity, fire or brilliance of the sun, speech and heart, as identical.

All impressions of names and forms are embedded in the mind. Hence, everything has to be meditated as unified with the mind. It is through the mind that one projects one's consciousness everywhere in space in all directions, here divided as five, the east, south, west, north and above. In some other contexts, the directions are given as ten, the four

main directions, east, south, west and north; the four intermediate ones, the south-east, south-west, north- east and north-west; and the two, above and below.

The five smaller number given in this meditation is indi- cative of all the ten which means the whole space. When one meditates on the identity of the directions, with their presiding deities, the divinities present in them and their counterparts in the body such as the eye, righteousness, semen, truth, speech and mind which are also indicative of the remaining parts in the body, one loses one's separate individuality and becomes universal. He realises that the heart rests on 'I', the body, and the body rests on the heart, and the whole universe is a projection of his mind or heart, the Consciousness. He is thus, freed from mortality, for he becomes one with the cosmic prana, hiranyagarbha whose manifestations are the pranas, directions and all the rest.

There is no difference between God-realisation and Self- realisation since the words 'God' and 'Self' are to be understood as synonyms. This is illustrated through the follow- ing conversation which is said to have taken place between a sage and a spiritual aspirant.

Aspirant: O Revered Sage, Can I have darsan of God? Sage: Yes, certainly.

A: When and how I can see Him?

S: Please tell me who you are. I will then go and tell God about your visit and get His permission. Then you can go and see Him.

A: Here is my visiting card which gives the information you want my name, the academic Degrees that I possess, my professional address and also home address. S: (After reading the card) Is this your real name? Or, are you hiding anything?

A: This is my real name; why should I hide anything from you, holy Sir!

S: (Pointing out to his pair of spectacles, the book in his hand and the coat he was wearing) Whose is this pair of spectacles?

A: It is mine.

S: Whose is this book?

A: This also is mine.

S: Whose is this coat?

A: Do you think I am wearing another's coat? It is certainly mine.

S: Now you see these three articles are yours but you are not the articles. Am I correct?

A: Certainly; You are perfectly correct. How can I be these articles! Even a fool will not say that such articles are he. They are certainly not 'I'.

S: (Now touching his head, hand and leg) Whose head is

this?

A: My head.

S: Whose hand is this?

A: My hand.

S: Whose leg is this?

A: My leg.

S: (Pointing to his whole body) Now I ask you, whose body is this?

A: My body.

S: Therefore you are certain that 'You' are not the head, not the hand, not the leg, not the body.

A: Yes; It must be as you say. It seems very reasonable and convincing.

S: Now, I tell you, the visiting card is giving the name and address of this body, the degrees and profession this body is having. When I go to God I want to tell Him who you are and not what this body is. Please tell me now who you are.

The aspirant understood his mistake in identifying him- self with the body. Then following further instructions of the sage, he reflected over his own real nature, meditated on the Self which is different from the three bodies and realised the Self. He also realised that God and Self are not different and that the world is His manifestation.

77. SAKALYA-VIDYA-3

(MEDITATION IMPARTED TO SAKALYA-3)

This vidya occurring in mantra xxvi of the ninth brahmana of the third chapter of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, deals with the meditation on the subtler aspects of Consciousness. This vidya is contained in the questions and answers of Vidagdha Sakalya and sage Yajnavalkya. In the meditation just preceding, i.e., sakalya-vidya-2, Yajna- valkya prescribed the meditation on the heart resting on the body and the body resting on the heart. Questioned by Sakalya as to what is the abode of the body and the heart, Yajnavalkya says it is prana. prana which is subtler, is the support for the body and the heart. Thus should one meditate. Beyond and subtler than prana is apana. Having merged the body and the heart in prana, the meditator should meditate that prana as identical with its abode which is apana. prana and apana by their movement up and down, keep the body in position. Taking the consciousness further, the apana is, as it were, the effect of vyana which pervades the whole body and which is subtler and more pervasive than the other two. It is this vyana which effects the circulation of blood throughout the body. Having identified through meditation, the body and the heart, prana and apana with vyana, the vyana should be meditated upon as one with that which is subtler than it, viz., udana. All the three prana, apana and vyana may be said to be tethered to udana without which the three will not be able to discharge their functions. Now, the last and ultimate stage in this meditation is merging this udana in samana which is the subtlest and is located in the navel which means the centre, not the physical centre of the gross body, but the spiritual centre. The navel in this gross body also may be said to be located in the centre of the body. The body and the heart along with the four prana, apana, vyana and udana, are now to be meditated as one, one with the samana. Here, samana does not mean the limited part of prana. It means the Self itself. Everything has to be identified with the Self.

This Self is described in the Upanishadic mantra as 'Not this, not this'. It is imperceptible, because nobody has per- ceived It so far through the senses like an object. It is un- decaying, for It is infinite having no birth and death, no beginning and end. That which has no birth and death cannot have growth or decay or transformation. It is un- attached, because of Its extreme subtlety. When the ether or space, the subtlest of all elements itself is unattached with anything even though it holds all the worlds and planets and the stellar system in it, what to speak of the Self which is the cause of the ether itself and which is, therefore, more subtle and more pervasive than ether! Nothing can touch the Atman-Brahman, although It is with- in and without, pervading each and every object through and through like the thread in the cloth and the rope in the rope-snake. All the universes rest in It. It is unfettered, being unlimited. It never feels pain and suffers no injury, because It is free from the subtle and physical bodies which alone are the causes for pain and injury respectively. Thus should one meditate.

The result of this meditation is immediate liberation. What would be the 'experience' of one who attains this liberation? Here is the full song sung by the great Sadasiva Brahmendra Swami of which a mention has been already made in nachiketa-vidya. In this song the sage clearly gives ex- pression to his "Experience" of the non-dual-Infinite-Cons- ciousness.

sarvam brahma mayam, re, re,

sarvam brahma mayam.

O man, Listen:

All this is the Absolute-Full,

All this is the Absolute-Full.

kim vachaniyam kim-avachaniyam,

kim rachaniyam kim-arachaniyam.

What is there to speak! What is there not to speak! What is there to write! What is there not to write! kim pathaniyam kim-apathaniyam, kim bhajaniyam kim-abhajaniyam. What is there to study! What is there not to study! What is there to worship! What is there for non-worship! kim bodhavyam, kim-abodhavyam, kim bhoktavyam, kim-abhoktavyam. What is there to learn! What is there not to learn! What is there to experience! What is there not to experience! sarvatra sada hamsa-dhyanam, kartavyam bho mukti-nidhanam. O man, your duty is to meditate on the Self every- where at all times.

It is the store-house of Liberation. Here, the great sage who was always established in God- consciousness, sitting, as it were, on the peak of the mountain of Consciousness and looking on both sides of the mountain, proclaims what he experiences. On both sides he experiences only Consciousness. On one side he 'perceives' the transcendental Consciousness and on the other the immanence of that very same Consciousness in each and every atom of this infinite creation. Looking on one side he says that there being only the transcendental Consciousness, there is nothing to speak or write, nothing to study or worship and nothing to learn or experience as there is neither the manifested nor the unmanifested. Looking on the other side and perceiving the immanence of God in every object, he says that there is nothing which cannot be spoken or written, nothing which cannot be studied or worshipped and nothing which cannot be learnt or experienced, for all that is spoken and written, studied and

worshipped, learnt and experienced, is that Consciousness alone. 'Perceiving' the transcendental and immanent nature of the Supreme and remaining established in It, he does not see any difference between the unmanifested, infinite Consciousness and the manifested universe, both being the Pure Consciousness alone. He en- treats all men to meditate on the Self and realise this great Truth.

78. CHATUSHPADA-BRAHMA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON BRAHMAN WITH FOUR FEET)

This meditation is instructed by Sage Yajnavalkya to king Janaka and it occurs in the opening section of the fourth chapter of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad. Leaving off the story part which may be considered as either an eulogy on the meditation or which is indicative of the traditional method of imparting such meditations, the Upanishad takes the aspirant in six stages to the ultimate Goal, the Absolute which defies all definition and description and about which even the Vedas state only in negative terms as 'neti, neti', meaning 'not this, not this' or 'not thus, not thus'.

It starts with the meditation on Brahman with four feet (padas)-the speech, the fire-god, hiranyagarbha or the Un- differentiated, and consciousness (prajna). Fire-god is the presiding deity of speech. He has come out of the mouth of the virat-purusha (hiranyagarbha) says the purusha-sukta mantra. Speech is made possible only through Conscious- ness. Without Consciousness nothing is possible. But there must be something intermediary between Consciousness and the fire-god and this is the undifferentiated cosmic ether, which is termed as the mula-prakriti or isvara, or hiranya- garbha. All Veda is an expresion of speech. Thus one has to meditate on speech as identical with the fire-god, which is again identical with the unmanifested, which again is ultimately non-different from Consciousness. The result of this meditation is attainment of all desirable objects in this life and identification with the god of fire after death.

The second step in this meditation is on the identity of the four padas, viz., prana, vayu, the Undifferentiated and love (priyata). prana is vital force or life. It is a cosmic principle which functions in the body. Breathing and other functions are only its manifestations or expressions. The presiding deity is vayu, the god of air, the subtle cosmic element. If we analyse and go a little deep into the nature of

life, we would arrive at the principle of love which lies at the root of life, love for the preservation of life. That one's love for one's own life is deep-rooted is very clear for, men try to preserve their lives even at great costs and even by performing acts which are considered unworthy and de- grading.

In the third stage of this meditation, we have to effect the identity of the four padas-the eye, the sun, the Undiffer- entiated and truth (satyam). The eye is the organ of seeing and its presiding deity is the sun-god who is said to be the eye of the virat-purusha. Here, truth may be taken either as the ultimate Reality with the undifferentiated as the connect- ing link, or as relative truth which is also an expression of the ultimate Truth. What is seen by the eye is considered true. What is heard is not given so much value, for it may or may not tally with the truth. Therefore, the meditation on the eye, as identical with truth, the cosmic deity which is the sun, and the undifferentiated, is instructed.

Next comes the meditation on the four padas-the ear, the directions, the Undifferentiated and infinity. Directions are the presiding deities of the ear. Directions are in space and space is infinite. There is no limit to the space. Nobody has seen the end of space. Infinity is its nature. The Absolute is also characterised as infinite, unlimited, not limited by space, time and object. Therefore, one should meditate on the ear, as identical with its presiding deity which is the directions, with the other two counterparts, the undifferentiated and infinity (anantata).

In the fifth stage, it is meditation on Brahman as consisting of the four feet in the form of mind, moon, the Undifferentiated and bliss. This is a more difficult form of meditation. The mind has to meditate on itself as the first quarter. Here, the mind which is the subject has to meditate on itself and not on an object external to it. The presiding deity of the mind is the moon which is also the source of all sensory happiness. It is a well known fact that all happiness is mental. The universal counterpart of all sense happiness is that of hiranyagarbha

which is hundreds and thousands of times greater than the maximum human happiness, as given in the calculus of joy in the Taittiriya-upanishad II-8-i to iv and Brihadaranyaka-upanshad IV-3-xxxiii (vide anandamaya vidya). The source of this happiness of hiranyagarbha is the Bliss which is the Absolute itself. Meditation becomes boredom in the early stages, because the mind is disconnected from bliss. As long as mind retains its individual nature, it is difficult to connect it with bliss. Hence, the Upanishad instructs this meditation on the four-fold Brahman, Brahman with four feet, the mind, the moon, hiranyagarbha and bliss (ananda).

The sixth and the last stage of this meditation is on the heart with the other three feet viz., prajapati who is the presiding deity of the heart, the Undifferentiated ether or hiranyagarbha, and sthiti, stability. Some meditate on the fleshy organ which goes by the name heart, the biological heart, some others meditate on the psychological organ, the mind as seated in the heart. Still others meditate on a lotus shaped centre, a few meditate as a centre of radiance, and so on. Heart is the spiritual centre. For all practical pur- poses we may say that the mind is where the heart is. The mother's heart is on the child and the greedy man's heart is on his wealth. In deep sleep, the mind is said to be absorbed in the heart. The presiding deity is prajapati, the creator Brahma, the father of all creation. He is also hiranyagarbha and the unmanifested ether, as well as sup- port and stability (sthiti). The emphasis in this meditation is on the feeling of oneness in one's heart with the rest of the universe. Feeling is deeper than the other functions of the internal organ such as thinking, willing, desiring, etc. The result of this meditation is stated to be identification with the presiding deities and attainment of all objects of desire. Everything becomes friendly with one who meditates thus. He becomes a veritable god on earth and becomes merged in the gods after the fall of his body.

For easy understanding the six steps in this meditation are tabulated hereunder:

I		II	III	IV
Individual		Universal counterpart	Transcendental	The Infinite
1.	Speech	Agni	The Undifferentiated (akasa)	Consciousness
2.	Prana	Vayu	-Do-	love
3.	Eye	Sun	-Do-	Truth
4.	Ear	Direction	-Do-	Infinity
5.	Mind	Moon	-Do-	Bliss
6.	Heart	Prajapati	-Do-	Stability

The individual has to be merged in its counterpart which is the universal which in its turn has to be merged in the undifferentiated isvara and finally all the three transcended to reach the name-less Absolute which is given here under six names in column IV.

79. INDHA-VIDYA

(MEDITATION ON INDHA)

This meditation was imparted to king Janaka by sage Yajnavalkya and is contained in section 2 of chapter IV of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad. The king prayed to be instructed on brahma-vidya. The sage told him that though he (the king) was respected by his subjects, was in possess- ion of all the wealth of the vast country of Videha, and well learned in the scriptures, he did not know the supreme Truth. The king admitted his ignorance and the sage started in- structing this meditation on indha.

indha is the name given to the Self. The word means He who is illuminating, lustrous and radiant. The sage instructed the king to meditate on the Self as indha, rather indra an indirect name of indha. Gods being impersonal cannot be approached or meditated through direct names. Therefore, they are given such indirect names. In the Aitareya-upanishad, the direct name of the Self is given as idandra and its indirect form as indra.

This indra, the Self should be meditated as seated in the right eye in the waking state. He does not directly act, but acts through the mind which in its turn acts through the senses. The main propelling energy for all the activities in one's own body as well as all other bodies, is this indra, the Self. Thus should one meditate.

The left eye is not so powerful as the right eye. In the act of perception both the eyes join together. The Sage says that in this meditation one should meditate that the person seated in the left eye is virat, the menifestation of the Self. They are symbolically represented as husband and wife. The space within the heart is the place of their union in the dream state. The subject and object coalesce in the heart. When the activity of the senses is withdrawn, the mind returns to its source which is the heart.

The food of this couple resting in the heart is the lump of blood which means the fine essence of the food we eat.

The Self is now called taijasa, he who shines identified with the subtle body. People who sleep after their meals use wraps to cover themselves. Fancying this similarity, one should meditate the net-like structure of nerves in the heart as the wrap for this couple. These nerves which are ex- tremely fine and subtle, subtler than one thousandth part of a hair's thickness, serve as passage for taijasa in the state of dream. They are called hita-nadis, meaning nerve currents which are intent on the welfare of the jiva.

Passing through the waking and dreaming states, the Self enters the deepest recess, the deep sleep state when it gets itself disconnected from all distinction and separate- ness as an individual jiva. The ego is no longer there. And so all the troubles caused by it in the waking and dreaming states through its wrong understanding that the world is separate from itself, are no more in the state of deep sleep The ego which is so strong in the waking state and fights with the world and meets with knocks and blows, as though, becomes subtler, something like an etherial substance in the dream state and dwindles into nothing in the deep sleep state. Now, when the ego disappears, the universal prana, manifests itself as prajna. It sustains the whole universe and becomes part and parcel of the person in deep sleep. Hence, when one wakes up after deep sleep, one feels refreshed and energised. No great argument is needed to know that this energy has come from the cosmic prana, for during sleep no one takes any vitamin or enzyme, no lunch or dinner, no tonic of any kind which are generally supposed to be the sources of energy.

This meditation takes the meditator to the next stage. He becomes one with the Atman which is behind the prana and prajna and which is subtler than all the subtlest. The power of prana and prajna is really the power of the Atman. This Atman is described as 'not this, not this'

negating everything, individual and universal, and It is therefore, unknowable and ungraspable by the senses and the mind.

It is the state of complete desirelessness and fearlessness. Janaka by practising this meditation attained this supreme state of non-dual Atman. He became a jivan-mukta.

Anyone who meditates thus will also attain the same state of jivan-mukti, like Janaka.